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THE LIFE

OF

ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA,

ARCHBISHOP OF VALENTIA AND AUGUSTINIAN FRIAR.

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INTRODUCTORY AND HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE TIMES OF

ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

In giving to the public the Life of a Saint, it will not be out of place, in order to have a just idea of the part he played in God's creation, to also give a brief sketch of the age he lived in; to show what manner of men were in his time; what they did and how they lived; to picture their ways and describe their aims, and to point out their failures and extol their triumphs.

For in taking up the history of any one country or era, and viewing carefully its several phases, we cannot fail to note that it is the men that always make the age what it is, and not the age, the men; that all great events, no matter how diverse in themselves, cluster naturally around those who were the chief actors in the scene, just as hills, in the physical world, group themselves around some giant peak, and get their name from it. On them, it first shadows its mighty form, and only after it receives the first rays of the rising sun, do they, in proper turn, gain whatever light, prominence, or interest they may have. So, in like manner, are great men, sages, prophets, warriors, heroes,

and especially the saints,—the central points, as it were—of the events of their day. They it is, that by their virtues, their wisdom, their heroism, their many excellences of mind and heart, and by their holiness of life, tower far above the greatest of their race. Their minds are ever close wrapt in sweet communion with the Lord; their life, redolent of all the beauty of the Eternal One, and in it do they present to us a diorama of all in human life that is pleasing, instructive, or necessary for us to know. In a word, all they do, tells of the Spirit within, which quickens them in all good deeds, and gives them the power to light and guide their fellow-men.

Wherefore it is that, in God's own world of grace, His saints are likened—in the words of Holy Writ—unto great mountains, that break in here and there upon the view, give relief to the otherwise unbroken and unpicturesque plain of history, and serve as landmarks to fix our minds on *things* and not on *self*. Great men we can understand—of themselves, events—only through and after them. To call to mind some facts from story to exemplify our theme, we shall cull two or three from the several chief eras of the world. In them we shall find that, in the life of some one saint or other, has been illustrated in turn every virtue, natural or inspired; that every phase of human life, either in its refinement in learning or in its advance in civilization, has been improved by them, chastened and reformed; in a word, that every stage of society, religious, political, or

domestic, has been moulded on their life, and become through them God-serving, humane and peaceful.

In the olden time, among God's people, in Egypt, and in the Desert, was Moses. The reader of the history of that day can scarcely think of them without thinking too of him. Indeed, to do so would cost us mighty effort at the least, nor even then would our picture of the children of Israel, so despoiled of its main figure, be complete, or our acquaintance with Jewish history exact. And what Moses was in one era, Solomon was in another. How closely linked is not his name with whatever there was of wisdom, piety, law, and religion among the Jews! and with God's Temple! symbol of the Divine beauty, reared alone at Jerusalem, sole and solitary, among the nations of the earth who knew Him not. And that warrior-saint, Judas of the Maccabees, and the host of others, women, men, children, of less repute, Saul, Absalom, the young Tobias, Rebecca the comely, Sarai the saintly matron, Susanna the chaste, the prudent Esther, Judith the heroine, or Ruth the industrious house-wife—how ill-instructed would not we be without all memory of them! Without some mention at least of them, how bare would not the picture be of God's people! how bereft of all color, hue, and shade, and of every beauty that graces the maiden, or dignifies the matron, or exalts the hero! Without these we could have no insight of the many causes which at that time brought forth to the world the bravest of warriors, the wisest of statesmen, and the most

gifted of Saints, whose names have come down to even our times as symbols of the golden era of our race. And again—in the history of the Christian era, how closely intertwined are not the Apostles with the birth and spread of the new Law! Peter in Judea, Paul among the Gentiles, Andrew in Epirus, Luke in Achaia, John at Ephesus, Thomas in India, Mark in Italy, Philip in Phrygia, Bartholomew in India, Matthew among the Parthians, Jude in Mesopotamia, and James in Judea. How important are not all these to our conception of the history of the New Faith! Without them, how little we can value the sublimest traits in man! how little can we know, at all, the best that man can do! Yet with them, how clear it reads to us! how glorious! how divine! With them, everything that improves the heart, or instructs the mind—religion, faith, heroism, morals, customs, manners, all gleam along on our memory, together with the fair display of their own heroic gifts, of their power and constancy, of their energy and faith, along with their sufferings—by fire, by the sword, and with their triumphs over every device of a tyrant's rage to thral a martyr's zeal. With them all of these rise up from the distant horizon of the past, and floating onward like the white cloud and pillar of fire that guided the Israelites through the Desert to the mountains of the promised land, point out to us the way to tread; and, under their guidance, and with their spirit in us, we toil along in thought, pace by pace, backward from century to century through all the mighty

past, painfully, yet surely, till with eye fixed steadily on the goal, and heart throbbing with mingled awe and love, we go with them up the straight steeps of Calvary, and stand with them entranced before the great Master Figure on the Cross. In very truth, the history of the Church would read but bare without some mention, brief though it be, but still a passing greeting to the memory of those who were the leading actors in the scene,—the souls of the great drama which began at Calvary, and continued from there to the four quarters of the earth; of those who inspired to the world new life, fresh being; who brought light to the mind and love to the heart, who converted even where they did not pass, and who blessed, even where they did not convert. To leave these, and such as these, out from history, would be to present to our mind a mere skeleton, a thing bereft of flesh and blood; naked, cheerless, with no glow of feeling to magnetize our heart, nor light of truth to quicken our thoughts to Heaven. It would lack of life, and no lesson could be learned. As well might one try to sketch on canvass a summer's scene without the sun, or describe a land, and yet leave untold all about the noble features which give it interest; its mountain ranges, grand and solemn, that treasure beneath their crests the wealth of empires; or its rivers, that like mighty arteries, beat and throb with the life-blood of the land, and bear the nation's hopes upon their bosom. What the Old World then would be without its Ararat, its Sinai, its Horeb, its Thabor, or its Calvary, that would the history

of any other land or epoch be without some mention of its warriors, its heroes, its sages, and its saints. It is, therefore, that all readers of history connect the memory of great events with the names of the prime actors who took part in them. We remember the one only by connection with the other. If we read of more modern deeds, as of the Crusades of the Middle Ages, do not they come down to us with the memories, and even the names of the great, who lived and fought and suffered in them for the Faith? Of Peter the Hermit? Of St. Bernard? Of Pope Urban the Second? Of Godfrey of Bouillon, and of a host of others that took prominent part in them? Or, if we dwell for a time on that other war against the Moslem, in the XVIth century, in Pannonia, in Austria, at Buda, at Belgrade, at the gates of Italy, at Rhodes, and at Malta, can we refrain from thinking of the heroes Hunniades and Scanderbeg, or of that model of Christian chivalry, the Grand-master, La Vallette? Again, in the matter of those other crusades of much earlier date, of the crusades against the Arians—heretics, who denied our Lord's divinity; or of those against the followers of Nestorius, who, in impugning the divinity of Christ, would fain have stripped the fairest diadem from off His mother's brow, who is there but recalls too to mind the great adversary of the first—St. Hilary of Poictiers, or St. Athanasius, and the opponent of the other—St. Cyril, him of Alexandria? and St. Jerome, who wrote against the errors of Helvidius, and our holy Father Augus-

tine, who vanquished the Donatists, and St. Peter Chrysologus, who preached against the Eutychians? Truly did the Faith, whether in Rome or in Jerusalem, in Corinth or in Carthage, in Greece or in Gaul, lack not valiant defenders against its foes, its Christian knights of the pen and the tongue—zealous, trusty, skilled in every weapon of the brain, who like their brother knights of the sword, in after times, fought, step by step, inch by inch, in the North and the East, in the South and the West, from one corner of the world to the farthest off, all who would offer the slightest insult to their Mother's name, or breathe a whisper even against that Mother's Son. With lessons such as these, with the memories of such men as these were—men, who believed their faith, and fought too for their belief—what lessons may we not learn? Admiration only for their faith, or wonder at their zeal, or commendation for their energy, or glory in their triumphs, would almost be an insult to their name. 'Tis not for this alone they lived, and gained the crown, nor is it to the pupil's good to admire solely the master's learning and praise his virtue, unless, too, the lesson taught by him be learned and studied, and put in practice, if the sole benison obtained by him be solely information for the mind, and not improvement too of heart, time and toil is all lost, and the history of such saints might as well not have been written.

So natural, too, is it for man to group even instinctively all great events around their chief exponents, that we find this true, not only in the

order of grace, but also in that of the intellect. By inquiry we shall find that all the varied excellence of human genius, the arts and sciences, eloquence, jurisprudence, painting, music, poetry or letters, is dedicated, in a manner, to the *manes* of him that either first excelled in such, his chosen sphere, or, who at least, most outshone his rivals in it. Hence poetry is usually modelled after Homer's, while the painter follows Raphael; music has its Mozart; in eloquence, the mastery is conceded to Demosthenes; in statesmanship to Richelieu, and in the drama to Shakspere.

Moreover, even in civil story, no nation, no people that has not had its favorite patron—always a Christian and sometimes a saint—whose name was taught the infant lisping on its mother's knee, and youth, to look on as the synonyme of all that's good and brave and true—a very incarnation, as it were, of what is best in human nature when tempered by union with Divine grace. Such in Switzerland was Tell; in Britain, St. George; in Ireland, St. Patrick; Saint Denys in France; San Iago in Spain; in Germany, St. Boniface; and in each other land, its own.

No station in life these did not grace, nor rank they did not adorn, nor virtue they did not consecrate. St. Louis of France, on one throne, is the patron of the Christian ruler, and St. Casimir of Poland on another, the model of kingly virtue; at the domestic fireside, St. Elizabeth of Hungary or St. Cunegunda of the Goths, shows us how great the Christian woman can be, even though a

queen; in service outshines all others of her sphere, St. Zita of Lucca; in the army, St. Sebastian, model of soldierly valor; and in the galley, St. Vincent of Paul, exemplar of the Divine sympathy for the unfortunate. And so, whether under pagan despot or Christian ruler, whether in Catholic land or under Protestant sway, it matters little, wherever was a Christian saint, in the pulpit or in the rostrum, in the workshop or in the palace, in the dungeon or in the desert, there was a philanthropist, a patriot, a hero, inspiring new life into his people, virtue into youth, and into old age constancy. Even more, in every tropic and in every land, from Cathay to the Pillars of Hercules, or from Ethiopia to Hammerfest, has the name of the Catholic Saint, the Catholic hero, left engraven on high to ages yet to come, an earnest of what human skill, human industry, human genius can do when the heart is directed by grace to God. Yet from such love for one's patron, there springs —at times, 'tis true,—a kind of holy selfishness, as the case may be, an innocent partiality for one's own patriot saint, not that we ever seek to disparage another's choice, but that we strive each to make out his own the best. Yet the selfishness may be condoned, so long as virtue is the product, for while their memories remain fresh and green in our bosoms, wisdom will always be worshipped, true patriotism ever cherished, and virtue yearned for constantly and wisely put in practice. Their memories cannot but direct us onward in the same path they trod; they will guide us up the steeps

themselves once climbed, and the result will as certainly be, that what men once did in their own times, others will as surely do in theirs.

It is only of recent date that a traveller to the East, one learned in languages, yet who had in vain thirsted to find the key to the hitherto undeciphered language of the Assyrians, discovered it, at a glance, outside the walls of Teheran, in far-off Persia, where, high up upon a mountain-side, apparently beyond the reach of human hand, on the hard, bare rock, it was sculptured on two huge colossal tablets, the history of the Grecian Cyrus, written on one in Ancient Greek, on the other, side by side, in the long-lost and long-looked-for tongue.

So in other ways beside, does the learner read best with eyes turned upward. He who lives on the plain, has at times only a fair chance to see the heavens in all their beauty. The atmosphere is usually too dense, and mists and vapors sometimes hide from view what we would seek, and always dim the sight; while on the mountain, all is clear, the air truthful, the prospect vast, and nature in her grandest mood. So it is that he who seeks for learning, wisdom, or virtue, must perforce look upward—to the saints—to read his lesson. Like mountain summits that rear their head above the clouds of earth, they only are free from all the petty meannesses of life, from spite, distrust and pride—vices that so often dim our brain to Faith, and cloud our better sense from virtue.

Yet if we can boast of great saints in the history of the world, we have little ones too—studding here and there—in their own quiet, unpretending way, the plain of history. *Little*, because they are not so conspicuous to the reader as their better known brethren, but none the less endeared to Him, who sees and notes what the most of us pass by. *Little*, because their virtues were virtues chiefly of the heart, that is, of modesty, that shunned the eye of man; of love of solitude and prayer, that thrives best in the cell, in the hermitage, and in the desert; of kindliness in word, that most affects the poor; of trustiness in deed, of prudence in conduct, and greatest, methinks, of all, the virtue of wishing neither to be seen nor heard of men. Such was the holy Armand-Jean, reformer of La Trappe, and the blessed Benoit Labrè, the humble beggar-man of Rome; and she, so dear to the pious souls of our own day, Sister Saint Marie Alacoque—tender-hearted patroness of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Other saints were humble in all their greatness, while these—but lowly and hidden ones—were chiefly great in their humility. On those the gaze of all men was constantly riveted through life, partly in admiration for their gifts, or again in reverence for their sanctity; they were the monarchs that dictated to the age they lived in, giants in intellect that swayed the world of letters; that filled libraries; that formed schools; that ruled nations, leaving the spell of their genius on the laws, the manners, and the triumphs of their day. But these, in all

else just as dear to the heart of our Lord, shrank away from such seemingly rude contact with the world. Like tender flowers, they would rather lie nestling out of sight, away from the cold, rough blasts of human applause, like Mary of old, who shunned the giddy populace of Bethany, wishing the rather to deck her home with His Presence alone, and content alone with it.

Somehow or other it seems too that the Church is so identified with these, as the exponents of Her inner beauty, of that mystical interior loveliness, that so well befits the daughter of the King, quiet, unassuming, meditative, ecstatic, full of all the graces of the soul, without any, even the slightest spot or blemish, that to rub out their names from the calendar would be to rob us of what should be to us peculiarly endeared. For who dares rival such paragons in grace as the Apostles in their zeal—as the Doctors in their wisdom—as the Evangelists in their unction of soul—as the martyrs in their constancy,—or as the greatest of God's saints in all their supremacy of virtue? This we may not aspire to. The aim were far too lofty for such as we to try. For us then it solely rests to follow some humbler path to glory—to creep where others soar—to be content with a mediocrity, as it were, of what will nevertheless render home brighter, the conscience more at peace with its Maker, and yet the guerdon, none the less assured. Because holy Armand-Jean at La Trappe could chastise the flesh with terrible fasts, and go for live-long nights wlthout any

sleep; because the saintly beggar-man Labrè, wandered from door to door for a crust of bread, or a sip of water, or because St. Vincent of Paul visited poor prisoners at the galleys, and chatted gayly with them for hours on subjects seemingly trivial, yet taking his chance now and then to plant some homely Christian truth in those rough breasts that were scarcely ever soothed saved by ribald jest or vent of spleen; or again, because at times he would gather little homeless children around him in the street, and prattle with them for the hour on their own childish themes, and teach them the while how much he sympathized with them in their fancied woes, and then would love them all the more because they knew no mother; these, and such other lessons as these, so easy looking, that we all think any one of us can do, are the very ones we most have need to learn. We are inclined the rather to wonder that there are not more saints. To become one, does not seem at all to tax one's strength, and though the particular phase of some saint's holiness may not always charm and draw instinctively others onward to imitation, still their sanctity really does not intimidate us. If, then, we do not better, we ourselves are the first to recognize that the fault lies simply in that we will not take the trouble to follow the path to heroism that reason points out so clear, and that grace so softly illumines. To see Lazarus in the Gospel, and to sympathize with him at the table of the rich man, so long as he remains where he is, in Paradise, all are willing; but as

soon as he appears among us, in our company, then the mask of sanctity falls, and we spurn and despise him whom we are ready to pity, but only at a distance, and so we lose the crown almost within our grasp, the victory that is almost won.

These humbler saints teach us the same virtues too as did the Apostles and the martyrs, though not in so open a manner. For they were inspired to conceal the gifts of the King; these, to witness them publicly. Their light shone only before the Father in secret; of these from the tops of mountains. The trust of holy St. Agatha among the prætor's minions was undoubtedly as whole-souled as St. Peter's, only this is in the Gospel which all men read, the other only in a history but little known. Again, the constancy of B. Juliana de Falconeriis under sufferings from all manner of ills, and of the blessed Augustinian nun, Christine of Lucoli, with her unceasing aching of the teeth, was as much the result of divine strength on their part as was the heroic patience of St. Stephen at Jerusalem, whom the Jews stoned to death; or, was the spirit of penitence in St. Anthony of Egypt of greater merit than the blessed Clare's of Monte Falco, who went whole days, as St. Catherine of Sienna did for entire months, without meat or drink? And, though angels (as is well known) comforted the great St. Nicholas of Tolentine for months before his death with their celestial song, and were even heard of men, yet may we not surmise, and that too in full accord with Catholic teaching, that the dying moments of many others

besides, whom we see pass away from earth wholly absorbed in thought, and almost ecstatic in their calmness, are consoled too by the like sweet commune with heaven? This class of saints, they of the inner life, are therefore wholly indispensable to the Christian world. They bridge, in a manner, the chasm between our exceeding laxity and the world-known heroism of the master saints, and this same serviceableness of theirs is their chief claim to our love and veneration. Their life seems so comforting, their triumphs so easily gained, that with their guidance we are almost coaxed to follow where otherwise we would despair. Such then is the admirable economy in the Divine thirst for souls, that has in His bounty raised up saints, whenever need demands, on the throne or in the republic, in the workshop or in the school; some as patrons over asylums for the ills of man, while others mark each phase of life, of human industry and toil, with its appropriate virtue,—guardians to the slave, of hope; of perseverance, to the scholar; and of justice, to the ruler; patrons in each branch of study, as was St. Cecily, patroness of song; St. Catherine of Alexandria, of philosophy; and of theology, St. Theresa; while all are so graded that no two offer us the like characteristics, either of mind or heart, so that every Christian, whatever his rank, slave or monarch, or whatever his state, cultured or unrefined, may have his protector—St. Sebastian, patron of the soldier; St. Aloysius of youth, St. Pancras of childhood, St. Agnes of the maiden, St. Maxima of Africa of the virgin-wife,

and St. Monica of the matron. Thus too has Divine Providence raised up saints among the children of the new Faith, not only to symbolize some one single virtue, but to portray each fairest trait in man, while at times too, He exalts others in whom seems to have been concentrated all that is grandest, holiest, and noblest in our race; oracles of wisdom, of learning, and of holiness, who seem to have been born only to recall the zeal of the Apostles, the fervor of the Evangelists, the inspiration of the Doctors, who possess the marvellous acumen of a Socrates, the resistless eloquence of a Demosthenes, or the fervid imagery of a Homer, and who, like Alexander of Macedon, leave the world only after they conquer it. These were such masters, in their way, as to triumph equally over the heretic that would ruin, or the schismatic that would rend the seamless vesture of the Son of God. Such a one was the "Angel of the Schools" in the XIth century, and the "Eagle of Africa" in the Vth, men of such gigantic mould—statesmen, rulers, reformers, who could sway an empire as easily as dictate to grammarians; write on the Trinity of the Eternal One, or delve into the musty records of a Varro; lay down laws to philosophers, or direct a monastery. Such were St. Jerome and St. John Chrysostom in the IVth century, sole masters, in the East, in the realm of thought, as were St. Augustine and St. Thomas in the West.

And thus while each science had its patron, wisdom its exponent, and virtue its champion, so

had each vice its Nemesis. These too were the Saints. For it is but natural that virtue should ever combat with uncleanness, and truth with error. Hence, while the Church of God fosters one, she must, and always does, war on the other. She would not else be the Spouse of Him whose Spirit is ever quickening her to piety and holiness in every age, even unto the consummation of ages. Wherefore the first war—that of Michael the Archangel against Lucifer—the first war of humility against pride, was merely the skirmishing attack of the great campaign to be carried on in after times between the spirits of good and evil, and of grace and sin; the foretaste merely of the banquet of blood the saints would have to drink; the opening of the "Dance of Death," wherein life and death and grace and sin would be partners to the end of time; the prelude to the mighty "Drama of Exile," wherein the sweet angelic strains of those who chant the praises of the Lamb, would in all after times be rudely broken into by the discordant noises of the "Spirits of the Storm."

Consequently the history of the Catholic Church is, and always will be one unvarying record of faith at war with infidelity, and of morality with vice. On one side of the page are clearly seen the laws of God, the traditions of His saints, the zeal of His priests and the faithfulness of His people; on the other, are just as clearly seen His enemies, schismatics and heretics; crimes and all manner of foulness; on one side is the Spirit of the Most High, and on the other, the Demon of the Abyss.

Moreover, the history of the Church is the history of the "City of God," and that of her enemies, the history of the "City of the World." When, therefore, in the Ist century, broke out the unclean doctrines of the enemies of Christ, such as St. Paul speaks of in the thirteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and in the third of that to the Colossians, virtue found a bulwark, and morality a champion in the Apostles. These were the chief and first antagonists of the enemies of Christ. And afterwards as vice spread through those countries that had been converted first to the Faith, and men grew more wicked in their days, God raised up new saints to supplant the old who had fought the good fight and had been gathered to their fathers. But with all this the torrent of evil never ceased; it still ran on; it was stayed maybe for a time in each age by the saints who rose against it, as rivers are sometimes turned from their course by mountains, and forced to sink away in the earth and lie concealed out of sight, but certain to appear again. Thus when the Nicolaitans, a filthy heresy, appeared in the Ist century, and the same St. John the Evangelist arose against them, they disappeared for a while, but afterwards (in the IId century) they again came to light, under a different form and different name. Physicists remark the same property in waters that flow under ground, that they lose some of their natural ingredients in their subterranean course, but gain others instead, and then come forth, seething maybe, and bubbling and boiling with the taste of some different acid or

alkali, but just as foul as ever. St. Clement of Alexandria unearthed these heretics of the IId century under the names of Carpocratians, Adamites and Valentinians; and again defeated, these same came to light in the IIId century, under the name of Manichees, and forthwith the Church convened synods and councils to again condemn them, and as often afterwards as they appeared, no matter how changed their name, or disguised their form, so often did the Church call out her warriors to defend the teachings of her Faith from these noisome errors, and guard the morality of her people, that had been entrusted to her care, from their depraving influence.

The reader of history cannot fail to note that heresy invariably aims at two different points, the head, namely, and the heart, and that these it always keeps in view; moreover, that it always fights with two-edged weapons, error and licentiousness; the one, to distort the mind by untruths, and the other to demoralize the heart by crime. Consequently when Simon, a heretic in the Ist century, assumed the title of Redeemer, of Paraclete, etc., he was merely a teacher of error, and consequently as such, an enemy to truth; but when he gave to a mere creature—a woman, called Helena*—the

* In the year 1532, women began to exercise the ministry of the Word, in opposition to the teaching of St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, ch. 14, v. 34–35. Their leader was named Argula, a woman of not ignoble rank. In earlier ages, the Montanists had their Priscilla and Maximilla. So too had the Peputians and Collyridians. *V. Berti, Hist. Eccles. Compend.* v. I. p. 163.

worship of *latria*, or that due to God only, he then became a teacher of immorality, and consequently an enemy to virtue. And so with Cerinthus—another heretic of the Ist century; he denied the creative power in God, which is an error against faith and a blasphemy, and yet he admitted (as did Mahomet in the VIIth century) an hereafter of sensual bliss, a creation solely of his own device, and this was his contribution to impurity. In the IId century, the old errors of Cerinthus were again unearthed by Carpocrates (mentioned above), who admitted too, all manner of turpitude and baseness, under the pretext, as he declared, of fostering Christian liberty, and hence came the spiritists and free-lovers of that day. In the IIId century, Manes —founder of the sect of Manichees—did his best too to sap the Faith, by teaching there were two principles in nature, equally great, equally powerful, and yet both supreme and omnipotent; one, the principle of good, the other that of evil, who warred each with the other for mastery in man; hence that man, no matter how he lived, (it might be righteously, and then it was due to the good god; or then again, evilly, and then it was due to the bad one,) but that whether he lived a saintly life or an immoral one, he might always presume on divine sanction either for his virtues or his crimes. Hence were the Manichees as impious as they were impure. And so on from age to age history tells the same unvarying tale of grace and sin, and virtue and untruth. The current of impiety and vice has always swept through every

land, side by side, with the river of life, never mingling their waters, keeping them always distinct, yet poisoning and refreshing the faithful, as, by turns, each in its own country grew the strongest. The first may be likened to those sluggish streams we see on a summer's day, covered with loathsome corruption gathered from the refuse on their banks, that poison the very air, and so sicken the soul as to dull all feeling in us, so that we even lose our sense. Such was heresy in the olden times, foul, corrupting, demoralizing, a pool of ignorance, and such is it now in ours, as the statistics of those countries, viz: England, Holland, Prussia, Scotland, and the United States, or wherever else heresy may reign, go to prove, that where the laws of God are ignored, crime is rampant; despotism the only rule; the oppression of the poor, invariably a sequence; immorality under no restraint; nor any sense of decency, even of that which nature teaches, save in so far only as coerced by the edicts of a police. But Faith, on the other hand, like a pure, limpid stream, flows on uninterruptedly from the Rock of Peter, clear and healthful, full of life; charitable, humane, and chaste; always strongest where most persecuted, and its adherents always most exemplary, where they are most tempted. And must not that doctrine be sound, that morality pure, which from Christ comes down from age to age in His Church, through Apostle to Pontiff, through Saint to Martyr? until to-day, for the first time, maybe, has been executed the injunction of the Holy Spirit—"Go, teach all nations, preach in every

land." The Faith is always the same, never changing, the same in the XIXth century that it was at Jerusalem, at Rome, at Ephesus, and at Corinth in the Ist. The *Credo* that all say to-day, aye, many times each day, is the same that has been repeated from millions of tongues, in every age and in every land, and found a response in millions of hearts, from the day of the first council in the guest-chamber at Jerusalem, from the time it was first preached by Peter in Rome, under Claudius, and guarded by the successors of Peter when Claudius was forgotten; the same that has been illustrated by all the saints in their virtues, and the same that has been consecrated by all the Martyrs with their blood. As was its Founder, so is it. It is the same to-day. It was the same yesterday, and it will be the same to-morrow. Enough then to show the persistency of heresy and of heretics in sin and vice, and the lastingness of Faith in all virtue even unto the end of time.

And now passing by intervening ages we come down in the history of the Church to the XVIth century. This was the age of St. Thomas* of Villanova, and of the Great Reformation, (as it is called in history,) a period full of portents, grand and grave; of empires shattered, and of thrones disturbed; of states in revolt, and of nations at war; of countries lost to the Faith and of others saved; and greatest, most direful of all the events

* St. Thomas of Villanova flourished in the latter quarter of the XVth century (1488), and died in 1555.

that signalized this era, was the war of man with his Creator, a war that, for the first time in the history of the world, strove to overturn every single form of belief in a God, and to paralyze every virtue that could adorn the human soul. This was an era of universal revolt; an era of anarchy, and an era of unbelief, when all the streams of vileness, gorged with centuries' flood of impiety, crime, impurity, and every manner of lust and error—streams that had been converging gradually, yet surely, for ages, picking up from here and there, in every land, the filth of all the ancient heresies besides the new, the impurities of Manes, the fatalism of Mahomet, the impiety of Wiclef, and the blasphemies of Jerome of Prague, till full to overflowing they now rolled their waters over the valleys and plains of Germany. In a moral point of view Germany surely must have been the very lowest place in God's creation, the basest, the most corrupt of nations, a kind of Dead Sea beneath the lowest level of the rest of Europe. For there all virtue seemed to have fled the Church; the days of Ananias and Sapphira were upon her; the foul vices of the Nicolaitans and Gnostics that had been running partly above and partly beneath the surface of society, from the Ist century to Manes, and from him to Mahomet in the VIIth, and thence onward to the Fraticelli and Turlupini in the XIVth, now burst forth as a deluge over the land of Saxony. It well nigh covered the tops of the loftiest mountains, and these, at the most, gave forth but smoke, not light,

with uncertain voices, that only begot distrust. Religion was a by-word, law and order a vision of the past; the Church an ignominy, and the servants of the Most High, with religious of every rule, monks, hermits, nuns, even the watchmen of the Lord, who had been set on high places to keep sentinel over His inheritance, bishops, even archbishops, all with rare exception, were defiled with its slime. To add to the terror of the scene, the flames of civil despotism now burst forth, the embers of which had been blown by the sycophants of Charles VII. of France, a quasi-anarchy, in its way, a monster—the first-born of the schism of Photius, and both in direct line from the impious descendants of Core, Dathan, and Abiron*—the base intermeddlers in Moses' time with the Tabernacle of the Lord, all these now rolled over Europe, scorching wherever they breathed, and blasting wherever they touched, destroying at the same time, all veneration for the altar and all respect for the throne. The picture drawn by the historian Audin is dark indeed. From it would appear that not in one place only, but that everywhere was a dearth of virtue, a harvest of corruption, a miasma of intrigue, in high places and in low, together with open violation of God's laws, desecration of the Sabbath, of the feast days of the Church, with little faith or none in her children except a full and free belief in the dogma of the Epicureans, that sensual sect of pagan times, who were ever chanting the antiphon, "*Let us eat and*

* See Book of Numbers, xvi. chapter.

drink to-day, and be merry, for to-morrow we die;" and, among her ministers, plenty of simony and sacrilege, and such is the picture of Christian Europe in the XVIth century.

A brief inquiry into the condition of each important state of Europe will show us that the whole land was at that time shaken from its lethargy as by an earthquake of disorder, that morals were everywhere in conflict with the Decalogue, that society was convulsed by intestine feuds, and that the light of Faith was darkened by their sins from the minds of men. In every quarter were wars, or the rumors of wars; schisms between the state and the Church, and quarrels between parties within the Church; princes at dagger's point with princes; subjects in rebellion against their masters, and both, like wild beasts, howling against the ministers of the Lord, and with glowering eyes, indicative of the spirit of cruelty and rapacity within their bosoms, thirsting, but not for the first time, to drink their fill of the life-blood of the saints. One emperor, Charles the Vth, was embroiling half of Europe in his uneasy hurrying from Madrid to Paris, and thence to the Netherlands, and from them to Germany, foolishly striving, as rulers do now, (will they never learn how to rule?) here, to enslave the Church, so as to make it the minion of his fancy; there, to wheedle it into acquiescence, to make it the partner of his guilt, and in the end missing both aims by dismembering his own realms, and then seeking safety in a foreign land. Another ruler, Maximilian of Austria, at war with

Venice, as Charles was with the first Francis; Italy all cut up by deadly strifes that were for calling in foreign aid—some the Spaniard, some the French, others the German, and all in disunion, with each at the other's throat; and during all this time the anointed of the Lord was in distress, while Herodias danced and sang; another kingdom, France, whose court even then ruled the people, much more its sovereign, to the sad detriment of all law, civil and divine, and of virtue and morality, had given even as far back as 1438, by its dalliance with that most mischievous cabal of impious freethinkers, to wit, the Pragmatic Sanction, an earnest of the fruits of evil it afterwards would bear in the XVIIth century, of Gallicanism and Jansenism. And thus while Christian princes were casting lots for the seamless vesture of the Church, the wily Turk, as might have been foreseen, caught at the golden opportunity to wreak his wrath on the sons of those who had crushed him centuries before, on the plains of Judea. Heavy indeed fell the vengeance of six hundred years on the fairest parts of Christendom. Buda, Belgrade, Vienna in Austria, Cairo in Egypt, Armenia in Asia Minor, together with Cappadocia and Galatia; in Syria, Damascus, and Rhodes, Cyprus, and Cocyra in the Egean Sea, were overrun successively by the sultans, from Soliman in 1516 to Amurat in 1595, and only served to show that in their hate to the Church, and the trampling under foot of the rights of man, and the overthrowing of the destinies of nations, the Turk was but an apt imitator in the

East of the cruelty and usurpations of his brother sovereigns in the West. Add to all this, the consternation in men's minds from the plagues that swept off whole provinces, as that which at Tournay, in 1514, carried away 34,000 souls; the terror from the sudden bursting forth of waters from the earth, as occurred in Germany in 1515, or from the appearance of horrible monsters, as that which was born* in 1512 at Ravenna, with horns on its head, eyes in its chin, wings instead of arms, the claws of wild beasts for toes, and on its breast the figure of a cross.

Such were some of the many ills that hung like heavy clouds over the minds and hearts of men in the XVIth century, which, massing their power from every part of creation—from the East, from the West, from the throne, overturning the dynasties that gave them birth, even from the altar, destroying as by fire the polluter of God's sanctuary—came rolling along from Italy and Spain, from France and from England, growing larger in their hurry, blacker, fiercer, weightier, darkening from most eyes the light of Faith, of its purity, of its sanctity, till they burst forth in all their resistless fury, like a second deluge, over the Church. The first flash of the storm-cloud, that portended the ruin and desolation of the Holy of Holies, struck at Erfurt, on a hermit, whom a previous flash from Heaven had guided thither. Truly was he the arch-demon of the tempest, the first to declare revolt against the Lord of hosts, but not the only

* Berti.—Hist. Eccles. Compend. vol. II., p. 192.

one. With him came Melanchton and Bucer, and other many kindred spirits that helped to blow the flames of God's anger. And this was the period of the Great Reformation. Urgent indeed was then the need of reform in the Church, a reform instant, thorough, universal; and come it did, but in God's own good time. As sure as when, in the days of the Apostles, the traitor Judas was driven by his brethren from their midst, and perished miserably by his own hand; as sure as when that other arch-traitor, Arius, of the IVth century, broached his execrable doctrines against the Divine Nature of Christ, and fell dead in his blasphemy, a reeking mass of putridity, in the streets of Constantinople; as sure as when Pelagius, in the same century, vomiting forth his unbelief in the action of Divine Grace, ended his life, no one knows when or how, only that he disappeared from the eyes of men, as if swallowed up by earth in horror at his impiety towards Heaven; as sure as when that other scourge of God, Alaric, and with him the Vandal Genseric, in the Vth century, was warded off from Rome by that truly great pontiff, Pope St. Leo the Great, so now in these more recent times, when the great apostasy of the XVIth century was blinding men's minds to all truth, and paralyzing their hearts to all virtue, when civilization seemed at its lowest ebb, religion but a fashion and morality a name, the Lord raised up in and around His Temple, great reformers, who would illustrate anew the sanctity that had, for a moment only, been dimmed by a traitor,—great heroes, who would confirm the Faith by their

blood, and great saints, who would lead back the flocks of Israel to their ancient pastures, to the shelter of the mountains of the Lord, so that these in their turn might wholly reform the spirit of the age, re-introduce the practice of those kindly virtues that add so much to the beauty of the Church, namely, simplicity in word and sincerity in deed, instead of double-dealing, modesty instead of arrogance, charity instead of cynicism, zeal for God's glory instead of the love of pomp, and holiness of life instead of self. For the people of the Lord, in their prosperity, had well-nigh forgotten the "Promised Land," and were sighing, as of old, for the unlawful viands of the flesh. We may remark that while the ancient heresies, as a rule, were confined to one country or to one sole people, they attacked only one dogma or so at a time, and the rest they left untouched. Thus the Arians, in denying the consubstantiality of the Son—the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity—with the Father, did not however deny, explicitly at least, the Divinity of the Father, or of the Holy Ghost, nor did they refuse to believe with the Church, other of her doctrines. Neither did the Nestorians, in refusing Mary the honored title of Mother of God, attack avowedly the Divinity of her Son. So that on the whole, these ancient heretics, though totally separated from the great body of Christian believers through their pride and disobedience, still retained a partial faith. Hence were they tolerable, in a measure, for their earnestness in admitting some truth instead of denying all. They believed in God, and,

maybe, in some virtue, under a hateful guise, perhaps, and much distorted by their diseased fancy, but still a virtue, at least in name. Hence, though their creed was mutilated, deformed, monstrous, yet did they vindicate their claims to have some sort of a creed, to be believers in something at least. If they did not believe in Christ, well, they believed in Moses, or in Mohammed, but always in somebody apart from self, and in something not of earth. Moreover, one writer or two was, as a general rule, sufficiently able to cope with them. Thus the holy writers, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenæus, fought against the Valentinians and the Marcionites; St. Justin against the Montanists, and St. Cyprian against the Sabellians. The Manichees were opposed by St. Gregory, who refuted them; the Donatists, Arians, and Jovinians by St. Athanasius, and the adherents of Vigilantius and Helvidius by St. Jerome. The holy pontiff Germanus warred with the Iconoclasts; Ratherius, saintly bishop of Verona, with the Anthropomorphites, who were confined to Italy; S. Peter Damian, Lanfranc, and Alberic, with the Berengarians of Germany; St. Anselm with Roscelline; St. Bernard with Abelard, and St. Dominic with the heretics of Alby, all of France.

But this new leprosy of the XVIth century struck at the very life of all faith, at every form of Christian belief. For it no dogma, however sacred or revered, that was to be respected; no discipline, no matter how ancient, that was not a tyranny; no morality they did not spurn.

They believed in nothing, and naturally they respected nothing. They ignored the Apostolic practice of fasting, because fasting disagreed with their love of eating; they contemned that of Confession, because it disagreed with their pride; in turn, they threw aside all other Sacraments,—Extreme Unction, because the oil they would rather give to the well, who had no need of it, than to the ill, who, according to the Apostle, had; they despised Baptism, because as a rule they preferred wine to water, and the Holy Eucharist, because, for a good meal, meat is stronger than bread; they would not have Confirmation, for they desired naturally to give blows, not take them; they scorned the idea of Purgatory, because they had no sympathy with penance; that of Heaven, because it lay above them; nor had they any will to climb the steeps that lead there, and so, by strange contradiction, admitting neither happiness above nor punishment—only for a time, they had it—for eternity. As a matter of course, even the Sacrament of Matrimony, holiest of Sacraments, the cradle of Christianity, that had always been guarded by the Church with such singular care, and jealous watchfulness—even this, in their blindness of heart did they contemn. Did any one yearn for a wife, even though of another man's? let him take her, yet not one only, for such proceeding would, according to these pseudo-reformers, be too much a Popish practice; but let him have two, or even three, as had the German Margrave, or a half dozen, as did the English

Henry. For was not such a practice wholly in accord with their primary tenet—namely, to do each one as he pleased, even though it were in defiance of the law of God, for Him they did not even recognize; or of nature, for had they not come to improve it; or, of custom, for were they not the *reformers?* In turn, all the laws of nature, and all the commandments of God, were broken alike by these idolaters of self. Faith, virtue, everything that claimed part or parcel with Christian belief, whether the most ancient or the most revered, they did away with. They burned churches; they burned libraries; they burned priests; they burned monks; they burned nuns,—all in virtue of their high pretence to be looked on as the reformers of their age, so as to symbolize, it would seem, but in other's flesh,—as the Saracens had done in the VIIIth century, and the Communists did in the XIXth,—the fire of religious and civil liberty in their own. For them, at least so determined were they to overthrow every vestige of the Faith of sixteen hundred years, there should be no pope, save self, and he only to be the infallible one; no church, save the ale-house; no sacrifice, save that of the sword and gibbet; no altar, save that of the dicing-table; no priesthood, but that of mammon; no saints, save in heaven, where they took care to send them; no demons, save in hell, where they went themselves; no virtues, except such as reason calls vices, and no dogmas that we do not term madness. In a word, they recognized nothing, neither a God, nor a Trinity, except the trinity of

debauchery, of gluttony, and of unbelief; and this was the sum total of their religion, at least, in practice. So that, according to one historian,* a Protestant, the Reformation of the XVIth century "*countenanced immorality*," and "*gave rise to a spirit of fanaticism*;" and according to another,† it "*was* (in England) *begun by Henry, the murderer of his wives, continued by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest.*" When therefore such a frightful deluge of crime, of murder, rapine, lust, of blasphemy the most revolting and of unbelief the most incredible, now threatened to engulf all Christendom, and with it all morality and all religion, can we wonder that the Spirit of the Most High descended now upon the mountains of the Lord, in all His magnificence and power, as He had done on Sinai, on Horeb, and on Thabor? Can we wonder that the Lord now called upon His Church to light her beacon fires upon her loftiest mountains, and proclaim anew to the world through the mouths of her saints, that the Lord had come upon His people, that He who could raise children unto Israel, even from the stones of the desert, had again sent down His Spirit, not in tongues of fire, as of old at Jerusalem, yet in all the plenitude of His grace, of wisdom and of charity, of zeal and of sanctity, to the exercise of those virtues of which the world at this time had such great need? Hence at the time of the

* Hallam, *Literat. of Europe*, v. I., ch. VI.

† Edinburgh Review, on *Macaulay's History*.

Reformation were so many saints, more, perhaps, than we can note in any other era of the Church. Not that they were more numerous than had been the saints in the Thebais and under pagan persecution, but that while these are noted more for the exercise of some special virtue, as for instance, of austerity of life, of prayerfulness, of constancy, of charity or the like, the Saints of the Reformation, on the contrary, had showered down upon them every choicest gift of intellect and heart; they were fountains of wisdom, skilled in every branch of human lore, of classic, sacred or profane; they were linguists, scientists, and philosophers; masters of every weapon of the mind, besides being great in that other sense of the word, great in their holiness, as if each one of them had been sent to give masterly proof of some one single virtue; so that in after ages the faithful of every land might look to them as master-types of whatever there is in the world of grace, of sanctity, learning, wisdom, piety or zeal. And such they really were.

Hence while in the whole of Europe, in Germany, Spain, the Low Countries, Italy, France, England, Switzerland, or Bavaria, the waters of the deluge of sin and crime were pouring forth over the land, growing higher, and everywhere engulfing men in rioting, in drunkenness, and in excess, in sacrilege, and in wantonness, and in rapine; the faithful too from everywhere flocked around these saints of ours, to the cloisters consecrated by their virtues, to the hermitages adorned by their vigils, and to the temples of the Most

High, the arena of their labors, for help, for light, for guidance, and for safety from the flood. Whoever abandoned the Ark on the mountains was lost, so did those who in these times fled the Church, perish in their sins, while those others that stayed within her through the storm were with her saved. For she, who like her Founder is always old yet ever new, constantly quickened her children in those days of woe and darkness to fresh trials and to new triumphs over the spirits of the abyss. She who is ever renewing her inner self with fresh inspirations from Him who is at the same time her light and her life, jealously guarded in these times the faith and the morals of her children, the inheritance of the Lord, from the attacks and snares of those who would destroy the one and defile the other. She raised up among her children new saints to replace the old, who had been forgotten; new models of virtues for those that had been lost, and new instances of wisdom, zeal, and heroism for all.

Undoubtedly then the Church greatly needed reform at this time. Still reform for her was nothing new, and so she had it now. Yet as in other times she had felt the same need, and had provided it of herself, so now did she of herself begin to reform herself, wholly by herself, and not through others' aid. For one that is reformed by another must necessarily be dead, without life or spirit, while a living body can be reformed only by self, the outward form may change, but the life within, the spirit, must ever be the same. And so

the Church, the temple of the living God, brought forth reform alone, unaided, save by the Spirit of the Lord within her, herself remaining as pure, as unsullied, as divine in her own beauty, as so well became the spouse of the Eternal One. In reforming herself she had driven away from her portals in the year 325 the heretic Arians; in 381 the Macedonians; the Nestorians in 430; the Eutychians in 451; the Monothelites in 680; the Iconoclasts in 757; in 869 the Photians, and in the century preceding the present one, the XVth, the adherents of Wiclef, John Hus, Jerome of Prague, with the Thaborites, and the beastly Fossarii, the lustful Adamites, the no less wicked Orphani, and the inhuman Calixtines. These all had been bad enough, but the present heresies, as must appear, were inconceivably worse, vastly more dangerous, because more subtle, more crafty, and more widely spread. For the very ones to whom, being high in power, the Lord had committed the sceptre, that they might rule in wisdom and in justice—the very ones whom the Church had nourished at her altars most fondly, and had fattened on her substance, these would now fain drag her down into the slough of their own impiety and sinfulness of heart. Hence with St. Thomas of Villanova, the first great reformer of his age, the first in point of date, the reformer of the cloister in Spain, the model of zeal and charity to pontiffs, and the patron of the poor, came a host of others, famed too for their wisdom no less than for their sanctity. These were of every rank in the Church, and

of every class of society, archbishops, bishops, priests, religious of every order, men, women, children, and so numerous were they that it would seem the Lord had sent them purposely to show that virtue was neither of one sole country nor confined to caste. Hence he drew them from around the hearth, as well as from the hermitage; they were of each sex, and of every age, matrons and maidens, youth and fathers of family, of that sphere in life that is exposed more than others to the contagion of the times, yet who preserved, amid all kinds of danger, their virtue unsullied, and inviolate their faith. Prominent among these was the holy Ste. Jeanne Françoise Fremiot de Chantal, (1572–1641,) the model of devoted wives and of saintly widows; then the holy St. Vincent of Paul (1576–1660,) model of industry to the world and of pity for the poor; then the great St. Francis of Sales (1567–1622,) zealous in imparting instruction to youth, and S. Juan d'Avila (1500–1569,) the apostle of Andalusia; the blessed Francis Caracciolo (1563–1608); the venerable John Leonardo (1543–1609); the Spanish S. Juan de la Cruz (1542–1591); the venerable Philip of Penavillo, martyred at Rhodes by Soliman; at Milan, the great St. Charles Borromeo, "whom Jews might worship and Protestants adore," (1537–1584,) the reformer of the episcopacy in Italy as St. Thomas had been in Spain, and the venerable archbishop of Braga in Portugal, Bartholomew dei Martiri (1514–1590.) Then, beside these there was among the Carmelites, St. John a Cantalicio, mas-

ter of spiritual life; among the Theatines, St. Cajetan in 1547, and San Andrea Avellino of Castro-Nuovo (1521–1608); then the Ven. Angelo of Florence, a monk of Vallombrosa, and holy Michael, a recluse of Camaldoli. The Order of St. Dominic gave St. Rose of Lima (1586–1617) an American saint; the Order of St. Francis gave the B. Peter of Alcantara (1499–1562) a minor Observant, and model of austerity and penance, and St. Felix of Cantalicio, a Capuchin (1515–1587,) model of simplicity and innocence; the Society of Jesus was adorned by the Angelic youth, St. Aloysius (1568–1591,) by St. Stanislaus Kotzka of Poland (1550–1568,) by St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies (1505–1551,) and by St. Francis Borgia (1510–1572). While the Order of St. Augustine added to the catalogue of the blessed, the B. Joseph of S. Geminiano, who was martyred by the Turks in 1524; the Ven. Anthony de Fuentes of Hispali in Spain (1476–1517); the Ven. Alphonsus of Orosco, a Spaniard (1500–1591); B. Christine of Aquila in Italy (1542,) and the Blessed Didacus, proto-martyr of Peru (1568). These were some of the principal saints of the Reformation, yet many more must Divine Providence have given at that time to His Church, whom we know not of, nor will until the last great day, who served as salt that leavens bread, to keep alive virtue and holiness among a sorely tempted people, and that at an age when all memory even of virtue had seemingly fled the Church.

Yet, as Divine Providence had brought forth these models of virtue to combat vice, of wisdom to confound the vain learning of the world, and of wonderful sanctity to put to the blush the immorality of the pseudo-reformers of the day, He did not design that they should illumine the world only for a time, and then vanish without leaving a single trace behind. He wished them to be perpetuated, that the good work begun by them might never cease; that the lamps of their virtues might always burn and give light in the "City of God;" for the evil deeds of the Reformation were to last, and so also should the good. Therefore were instituted new orders of holy religious men and women, consecrated to the service of the Lord and to the aid of their neighbor, whose mission it should be to develop in society the virtues that most were needed,—compassion, to care for the sick and homeless and the poor, and to instruct the ignorant; kindliness of heart, to console the prisoner; sympathy, to alleviate the mournfulness of the captive; and zeal, to spread the truths of religion, from the prattling child at the fireside to the heart-sore wanderer at the farthest corner of the earth. Hence rank glorious in the annals of the Church the names of such benefactors to humanity as S. Juan de Dios, of Portugal, founder of the Order of Charity, instituted especially to give assistance to the infirm (1495–1550); St. Ignatius, a Spaniard, founder of the illustrious Society of Jesus, to give missions to the people, and carry the truths of religion to far-off lands (1491–1556); St.

Theresa of Avila, also a Spaniard, the reformer of her Order and foundress of the Barefooted Carmelites (1515–1582); St. Philip Neri, of Florence, founder of the Oratorians, whose chief aim is parochial ministration to the people of large cities (1515–1595); B. Thomas of Jesus, a Portuguese, reformer of the Barefooted Augustinians in Spain (1529–1582); St. Angela de Merici, of Brescia, foundress of the Ursuline Order, dedicated to the higher branches of teaching (1474–1540); the holy John Peter Caraffa, founder of the Order of Theatines, in 1567; Matthew Bassio, founder of the Capuchins, in 1525; then the Recollects, instituted in 1532; and the Barnabites, founded in 1526 by Antonio Morigia and Bartolomeo Ferrario of Milan, with Francesco Maria Zaccharia of Cremona; the B. Girolomo Emiliano, a patrician of Venice, who was founder, in 1540, of the Somaschi, who care for orphans; Cæsar de Bus, founder of the Regular Clerics of the Christian Doctrine, in 1570; John Bareira, a Cistercian, founder, in 1577, of the monks called *Fulienses*, a reform and offshoot of the Cistercians; St. Camillo de Lellis in 1585, founder of the Congregation of Ministers to the Infirm; Agostino Adorno, a Genoese, in 1588, founder of the Order of Minims; and the Congregation of the Most Blessed Trinity, in 1595, a Spanish society for the redemption of captives from the Turks. Enough, anyhow, to any candid mind, to show that the good spirit of reform flowed through and vitalized every class of society. None were left untouched, all were benefited by it; the clois-

ter became more God-serving; the cathedral a veritable house of prayer; the pulpit the oracle of truth; the school the seminary of wisdom, and the family the garden of the virtues. Each one of these gave illustrious saints to the calendar of the Church's heroes,—representatives, each one of the worth, learning, virtue, or heroism of his class, in those times that developed virtue in as quick proportion as was developed vice. Nor was the Church slow to recognize the wisdom of the spirit that prompted these men to either found new orders, or else to reform the old, that so virtue might have a refuge in the cathedral or in the cloister, as in olden times it had found solace in the desert. For among the various aims proposed by them, apart from those that are essential to all religious societies, as the observance of chastity, poverty, and obedience, were the restoration of those virtues wherein men had chiefly offended, namely, the knowledge of the laws of God, and this was particularly cared for by the Clerics of the Christian Doctrine; the alleviation of the miseries and ills of life, especially in hospitals and lazar-houses, to which the Congregation of the Ministers of the Infirm, and the Order of Charity were especially consecrated, and the holiest exercise of Christian charity, that of selling one's self into bondage (mostly among the Saracens), so as to redeem the father to his family, the wife to her husband, and the brother to his brethren,—a work of the purest love, the aim of the religious of the Spanish order for the Redemption of Christian Captives from the Turk.

But while the Church was renewing her vigor, while she was opposing virtue to vice, truth to heresy, and zeal to slothfulness, her enemies were by no means idle. Around the banner of Erfurt had been massed all the legions of the abyss, with Melanchton, Beza, Zwingli, Karlstadt, Oecolampadius, Calvin, Munster, Storck, and a host of others, who had again broached the old-time issue in Heaven between Michael the Archangel and Lucifer. At this time, then, when so greatly needed, were the soldiers of the Cross idle? While all the defenders of the Church were hastening to her aid, from the cloister and the cathedral, from hamlet and city, to wherever the foe was strongest, did the brethren of the great St. Thomas share not in the universal zeal? Had the children of Augustine, who had so discomfited the heretics of every age, now hung up the sword to rust, when the "City of God" was beleaguered by its new enemies, as sorely at least as when the Vandals stood in arms around their Father's see at Hippo? Were those who had labored so strenuously for the Faith of the Lord in every land, who had sat as counsellors and judges in high places,—in the great Councils of His Church, and latterly in those of Florence and of the Lateran, now to desert her, when a *quondam* brother hermit had proven false to his troth, and broken that rule which was so honored in every country, from Ormuz to Cadiz, and from Ethiopia to Iona? Were the two thousand monasteries that studded the plains, and hills, and valleys of Europe, of Asia, and of Africa, that numbered

among their thirty thousand inmates,* the dweller in the hermitage near the Hebron, the missionary in Abyssinia, the evangelist among the steppes of Poland, or the crusader in the islands of the Archipelago, not now to send forth their hosts of holy men, pious and learned,—scholars, preachers, divines and saints—to confront this new foe of the Cross in the West, as they had done against the Moslem in the East? Surely they were not now to prove false to their name. The faithful of the Lord never sleep, and the sons of Augustine never rest when the enemy is at the breach. From university and cloister, from pulpit and hermitage, came the brothers of St. Thomas, to defend the teachings of Holy Church against her foes,—even to shed their blood in defence of that Church these men would sneer at; to hasten here, and to tarry there; to labor with pen and tongue, and with prayer and discipline, in Saxony, on the Rhine, in Switzerland, in Baden, in Bavaria, in England, in Italy, in France, in Spain, in the Netherlands, as their great Father before them had done against the Donatists in Africa. No, St. Thomas was not alone in the battle. Neither was it the time for one man only to do battle, nor was the battle in one sole place. It was everywhere, and everywhere were

* These figures are taken from the statistics of the Order. They are given by Father Crusenius, who lived in the latter part of the XVIth century. He was a religious of holy life, and of great learning. He was successively Apostolic Visitor of the Order of the Premontré Canons in Flanders, Commissary-General of Austria, Bohemia, and Styria, and counsellor and historiographer of the Emperor Ferdinand II. In 1616 he rebuilt the magnificent college at Brussels.

his brother hermits with him. Everywhere along the line was matched warrior against warrior. It was heretic against the soldier of the Cross, sensualist against ascetic, infidel against the man of prayer. It was the colossus of wrong, the leader on one side against the champion of the right on the other. It was another war of Titans. The master-minds of pride, of revolt, of error, and of all vice, out of the Catholic Church, were drawn up against the master-minds of wisdom, the heroes of constancy, the paragons of sanctity in it.

First in Germany, first of all in Europe to attack the hydra of unbelief, was Father Bartholomew Arnoldi of Ussingen, a German himself by birth, an Augustinian by vow. This in 1517. He who had once been the teacher in wisdom and virtue when Luther was content with being an humble pupil, now the very same time Luther left the convent, dishonored his robe, and abandoned the Faith of his brethren, became the most unflinching antagonist against him.*

* The praises of Father Arnoldi have been sung by such writers as Possevinus, Gesner, Frisius, Verderius, Maraccius; besides by those of his own Order. On the wall of the convent-refectory at Würzburg, in Franconia, at one time were read the following lines:

"Olim me Luther fit praeceptore magister,
Fit simul et Frater Religione mihi.
Deseruit sed ubi documenta fidelia Doctor,
Detexi primus falsa docere virum."

Which, translated, reads thus:

When I was master, Luther became a doctor,
A brother too in sweet commune of Rule.
But now that he once doctor seeks to err,
I first of all did prove him false to Faith.

As Arnoldi was first in Germany, so in Italy another Augustinian, Ambrogio Flandino of Naples, was the first to give warning at the approach of the foe. The same year too (1517,) in Germany, another religious, Father Augustine Marius, a German, and once a fellow-comrade of Luther at the convent of Erfurt, rose in combat for the Faith against his former friend. Then comes Father Augustine Cappelmair, also a German, (praised by that sturdy champion of the Faith, Father John Eck, the Dominican,) to whose unceasing energy Albert Duke of Bavaria, attributed the immunity of his territories from heresy; and Conrad Tregarius, a Swiss, who, commissioned by the Bishop of Lausanne, took part in the debate at Berne between the Zwinglians and the Catholics, (which ended in 1528 with their defeat,) as Fr. Marius, two years before (1526) had, at the desire of the Bishop of Basle, entered the lists at Baden against the Lutherans and Calvinists; and Father John Hoffmayster, called by antonomasia, the *Anti-Luther*, as Flandino* was the "*Christian Plato*," the same whom the Bishop of Augsburg sent to Ulm and Dilingen to protect the Faith, whom William Count Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Bavaria, invited to Munich for the same purpose, and who by his unchallenged learning,† and

* Fr. Flandino is highly eulogized in the writings of Peter de Alva, a Minorite; Possevinus, a Jesuit; Marraccius, Toppius, and others. He was chosen bishop of Limoges, (Lamocensis,) and suffragan of Milan in 1507. He died in 1531.

† Of Fr. Hoffmayster, Leonard Haller, bishop of Philadelphia, writes that in the diets at Worms in 1545, and at Ratisbon

uncompromising faith and zeal so embittered the heretics, that in 1547 they killed him at Gunzburg by poison, after he had fought them seventeen years. And with these champions of the Faith, with these scholars, theologians, writers, preachers, come Fathers Bartholomew Hulric, and Christopher Fisther, both Germans; the first, a resolute protector of Catholic interests in the provinces of the Rhine and Suabia; the other, like Hoffmayster, skilled in debate and preserver of the Faith among the people along the Rhine.

Then the venerable Father John Staupitz,* vicar-

in 1556, whither he had been invited by the emperor Charles V., such was the effectiveness of his preaching, as to move heretics to respect and Catholics to admiration for the Faith. Augustine Ardinghelli, bishop of the Order of St. Dominic, in the Appendix to his "*Congeminata Vox Turturis*," says that Fr. John Hoffmeister surpassed all others, that he was born to war with heretics, that he was the leveller of the Confession of the Lutherans, and of that of Augsburg, and the most valiant defender in all Germany of the Catholic Faith. His words are: "*Claruit ante istos P. Fr. Joannes Hoffmeisterus provinciæ Sueviae sui Ordinis Generalis Vicarius, ad impugnandum haereticos natus, Lutheranorum, et Confessionis Augustanae eversor, Augustinianae Catholicaeque doctrinae in tota Alemania propugnator acerrimus.*" Gerard Velman, in the dedicatory letter to his work "*On the Acts of the Apostles*," says that he deservedly claims first place among the sacred expositors of his day—"*in numero sacrorum expositorum Hoffmaysterus hac nostra aetate facile principem locum merito atque optimo jure sibi vindicare potest, qui cogitatione, ingenioque . . . . . cuivis hujus temporis theologo extra controversiam potest praeponi.*" Praised also by Possevinus, S. J., Peter de Alva, a Minorite, Sixtus Senensis, a Dominican; by Frisius, Crescentius, and others.

* In 1501, Father John Staupitz went to Rome at the instance of Frederic Duke of Bavaria, to obtain the recognition of the

general of Germany in Luther's time, who nobly seconded, if he did not lead, the attack against the arch-heretic. Father Staupitz, a Saxon by birth, and of noble family, was a preacher of rare merit, most learned in all the science of those days. In the very beginning of Luther's downward course he took earnest part to arrest his fate. Even those who were most his enemies bear honest testimony,

newly-founded Academy of Wittenburg, as well as the privileges usual at that time to be granted by the Popes to places of learning. Father Staupitz obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff all he sought, as well as the prerogative of choosing the Chancellor of the new Academy and that of conferring degrees. He also filled numerous positions of trust, as embassies, etc., to various German princes. He was present at the Ecumenical Council of the Lateran, in the name of and with full powers from the Cardinal Prince of Salzburg. From 1503—1509, he ruled the province of Saxony with great prudence and notable improvement in discipline. The congregation of Saxony under the Rule of St. Augustine was founded in 1440, but from the year 1500 (17 years before Luther left it,) it had been totally exempted from the jurisdiction of the Superior-general of the Augustinians at Rome. This seems to have been a not unfrequent line of action among the offshoots of the religious orders of that day. Wherefore while the virtues of such independent societies may be aggregated to those of the parent order, their demerits should be imputed solely to themselves. In 1511, Father Staupitz was Provincial of Thuringia and Saxony, and from 1515—1517, vicar-general of all Germany. This latter was by Apostolic appointment. After 1517 he went to Salzburg, invited thither to take place among the counsellors of Matthew, Cardinal Archbishop, his ancient friend. After a few years in the Cardinal's household, *i. e.*, in 1522, he was elected Abbot of the famous monastery of the Benedictines, that had been founded towards the close of the VIth century, by St. Rupert, first bishop of Salzburg, and here, in 1524, Father Staupitz, fortified by all the consolations of Religion, passed away to a better life. He was buried in the monastery chapel of St. Rupert's. (*Viri illustriores Ord. Scti. Augustini, Tolentine*, 1859.)

at least, to his kindness of heart, his gentleness of mien; and that while others sought chiefly by reproof and argument to check the wayward Luther, he on the contrary sought the same end, but by different ways. But whom threats could not coerce, kindness, advice, and pleading, failed to move. In consequence Father Staupitz, now impotent to stem the tide of heresy, (as who was not? no matter how determined he might be,) did no more than abandon the field to more resolute men. Saddened at the many wrongs heaped on Holy Church by the subject he once loved so well, he goes, almost broken-hearted, to end his days peacefully in the Benedictine monastery of St. Rupert, in the quiet service of His Lord. His bitterest maligners do not impugn his fidelity to the Church, nor even cast a shadow of doubt upon his zeal. If faults he had, they were his prudence, somewhat too cautious maybe, for the times he lived in; his simplicity in trying to do by gentle means where force had failed; his kindliness of heart and his fatherly regard, eager always to soothe and not to irritate the fierce demons he saw around him. If these were faults, they were his only ones. Perhaps had others from the very outset tried gentler means as he would have, the issue had been different, and Mother Church would then have lost, in having fewer saints, but gained in fewer scandals.

However we pass now to others. Then comes Father Augustine Lupff, who warded off heresy from the Palatinate in 1521, and Father John

Little, a Saxon, in 1526, and Peter Stigler, a German, in 1534, who fought ably, as their brethren had done, in defence of the Faith, and Achatius Claus, a German, and Sigismund Scherer, a Saxon, who led the attack against the Lutherans in Austria,* and Arnold of Bornossia, who was sent in 1523 by the Superior-General of his Order from Italy to Germany to oppose Melanchton and Karlstadt. All these were Augustinians, in Germany, and brilliant representatives too of the sort of men Divine Providence makes use of to confound the enemies of His Church.

In France, too, how eager, how zealous, how efficient were the defenders of the Faith, history tells, in golden letters. We know full well how Francis Richardot,† Prefect of the Academy of Besançon, and afterwards bishop of Arras, kept his diocese clear from the miasma of heresy; how at Douay he held single combat with the heretics, and came off victor in the debate, by the conversion of his principal opponent; how the blessed

* According to the testimony of the Dominican Father Gravina, in his work entitled, *Vox Turturis.*

† Father Richardot was of Morey, in Franche-Comté. Pallavicini, in his *Histoire du Concile de Trente*, mentions him as "a prelate of great merit, for his theological learning, his talent in preaching, and his zeal for the propagation of the Faith." L. iii. p. 1066. Guicciardini calls him, "*most learned and venerable.*" At twenty-one years of age he taught Scriptures publicly at Paris. In 1563 he assisted at the Council of Trent, "*avec éclat,*" and took chief interest in the founding of the university of Douai, *V. Glaire, Dict. Univ. des Sciences Ecclesiastiques.* He died in 1574, at the age of sixty-seven, having been bishop for thirteen years.

Antoine de Bonis was martyred by the Calvinists while preaching from the pulpit, together with the blessed Nicholas Nautonier, sharer in his faithfulness as well as partner in his crown; how another —the blessed Antoine Escrozailles—was tortured to the death, by having melted lard poured over his body; how Augustin Guarin, and Augustin Mareschal, and Guillaume of Lyons, with eight others, were martyrs for Christ's sake; how at Tournay the blessed Pierre Pistorius, the father-provincial, was the sole antagonist of the Calvinists; and how blessed John Simon, with ten others, were shot by the same, in 1570. All this we read in history, and still the list runs on.

In Belgium, too, were the Augustinians no less earnest in their zeal and constancy, in defence of the faith, than had been their brethren in France. The blessed Justus van Dyche was martyred at Ghent, being compelled to walk through fire, and Father Walter de Raemaecker driven into exile, but first well-nigh beaten to death by rods.

But it is in England the story of the martyred Hermits ends the saddest. In other countries there was more or less of humanity shown them. At least there was safety for life. Across the frontier, into a neighboring friendly state, one, if defeated, could take a step, be free, and live; and in Germany, the fight was carried on chiefly with pen and tongue alone; while the confiscation of one's convent-home, the disbanding of one's brethren, the burning of one's church or library, or exile maybe, was the worst they had to fear. But in England

the war was waged with different means, with means most cruel and inhuman, with the sword, the rack, the gibbet; and the great Tower of London still tells the tale (in the instruments of torture yet shown to visitors) by what manner of logic the Faith there was fought, and what manner of men were its defenders. In the convent-refectory in London, two hundred religious, with the father-prior at their head, were murdered in cold blood by Henry's minions; and the traitor Cromwell, like a second Achab,* fell heir to this sanctuary of the Lord. In 1537, blessed George of the White Rose (*Rosa Alba*) of royal lineage, was martyred at the age of twenty-two, by the same Henry's orders, as well as the blessed Martin of Condres, in 1544, with Paul of St. William, both too of kingly line. At Cambridge, in 1537, another victim, blessed John Stone, who in his dying moments was comforted, as was the proto-martyr, St. Stephen, by Angels' voices and Angels' ministrations, and blessed John Traverse, an Irishman, in 1539, beside many others, all venerable martyrs in the cause of God, except the famous Bernard Andreas†

* For history of Achab, see *III. Kings*, 21st ch.

† Cooper, in his *Biographical Dictionary*, says: "Bernard was appointed poet laureate and royal historiographer;" that "he also held some tutorial office at Oxford. In 1498 the bishop of Lincoln conferred upon him the hospital of St. Leonard's, Bedford, which he resigned the following year. He also held other ecclesiastical offices. In or about 1496 he was appointed tutor to Arthur, Prince of Wales, and he was a witness of his pupil's marriage, by proxy, to Catherine of Arragon." This is substantiated by reference to the "*Augustinian Annals*" of that time. In some other histories, Father Bernard is given as the

of Toulouse, sometime librarian and typographer-royal to Henry. He, the poet, orator, and counsellor of Henry VIII, was the one that induced the king to write his noted book in defence of the Faith, which he dedicated to Pope Leo, and for which he received in turn the title he afterwards so dishonored, of "*Defender of the Faith.*" Enough has been said, however, to show how glorious in every land were the brethren of St. Thomas, how jealous of their charge to maintain inviolate the Faith of the saints, how skilled in the use of every weapon, the Church has by right consecrated to her aid, learning, saintliness, heroism, with which to match the hate, the impiety, the deadly examples of evil men who would assail her; the same weapons that she has always wielded, with signal effect, the tongue which she has blessed, and even the heart's blood of her children which she has venerated, whether in the person of a Chrysostom or a St. John Nepomucen, against a pagan despot, or of an Anselm, or a Thomas à Becket, against a renegade king. Such then, as have been described, were the sons of St. Augustine. In Germany, they were the first there to defend the Faith, where its enemies first had started; the first in Italy, where they hoped chiefly to raise adherents, and prominent among the first in England, in France, in Belgium, in Switzerland

author of the celebrated work, for the writing of which Henry gathered the honors. But as the statement does not appear to be universally recognized, or without some doubt, it is purposely left open to correction.

and Baden, in Bavaria, and along the Rhine. And it was eminently fitting it should be so. As in other times, the companions of the traitor Judas were the first to rise against him; so had the Augustinians an almost preëminent right to be the first in the field against Luther, the first in the rostrum, the first in the pulpit, the first to defend the Faith, wherever or however assailed.

From this it will appear how unwarranted is the statement, and how unfeeling is the charge, that the Augustinians were the chief partisans of Luther.* Some of them undoubtedly took his part, and, if we may credit history in general, many others too did the same, who were not in any way of the Order of St. Augustine, nor even admirers of it, or, in fact, of any save their own. But whether some few did or did not side with Luther, is not the point at issue. It is whether an Order universally respected for the saintliness of its members, for their learning, for their zeal, and for their wisdom, an Order which had been entrusted with the weightiest offices in the Church, and rewarded with the most signal proofs of the esteem of its Pontiffs, whether, in a word, "the Augustinian order with its principal members,"

* In D'Aubigné's "History of the Great Reformation," etc., "Reviewed," etc., by M. J. Spalding, D.D., Baltimore, 1844, on page 45, stands the assertion that:—"Luther's order, with its principal members—Staupitz, Link, Lange, and others,—were his warmest advocates; while the Dominicans, Cajetan, Hockstraet, Eck, and Prierias, were his chief opponents. The Dominican order continued faithful to the Church; the Augustinians of Germany abandoned it almost without an exception."

could even by the wildest of conjectures be supposed to have, in an instant, and at the beck of a traitor, abandoned all that was dearest to them, all that was holiest, and all that was most revered—their altars, their saints, their school and their reputation that had stood untarnished for a thousand years. Apart from such a wholesale apostasy never having occurred in the history of the Church, nor even in that of a single Order in it, the statement, as may be readily ascertained from a brief perusal, at the most, of the non-partisan historians of that epoch, lacks too even all extrinsic probability. The reflection any way is consoling, that all saints have been at times the butt of misrepresentation; that it is the good and only the good that Divine Providence so allows to be singled out for persecution, that so He may test their worth; and that in the history of the Church and of its Founder, the instances are not few, where virtue, dimmed by adversity, has shone forth all the more glorious, just as after a storm the sun always shines brightest.

Yet in reading the history of these heroes, does it appear that any one could have been more zealous in defence of the Faith than Arnoldi, who was the first to attack Luther? or more prudent than Cappelmair, who saved Bavaria (even to the present day) Catholic? or more trustworthy than Tregarius, who was commissioned by one bishop to take his place in public combat with the heretics? or than Marius in like manner commissioned by another? or could one well be braver than Hoff-

mayster? or more energetic than Hulric? or wiser than Lupff?—all Germans, all Augustinians. Could greater constancy be demanded of any one than was shown at Lyons by Father Guarin and his companions; or at Tournay, by the blessed Pierre Pistorius, the father-provincial? or at Ghent by the two holy brethren, Van Dyche and de Raemaecker? or in England, where the whole community was butchered to quench a tyrant's thirst for blood, and earth, in consequence, lost two hundred saints, but gave to Heaven as many martyrs? Can there be even the slightest pretext for such a statement, when in Italy, at the General Chapter of the Augustinians, at Tarvisio, the Fathers—representatives of the whole Order—condemned without reserve Luther, with all his errors, and with all his accomplices, stigmatizing these as execrable heretics? or when five years before (1512) at the General Council of Lateran, an Augustinian, Egidius Canisius of Viterbo, was delegated to pronounce the opening discourse, a man so learned, so pious, and so pure of life, as to merit commendation from all the Sovereign Pontiffs of his day, from Julius, and Leo, and Adrian, and Clement; one whom the historian Rohrbacker declares "the most brilliant light of his time,"* whom Pope Leo X. raised to

* Rohrbacker, in his "*Histoire Universelle*," l. 83, p. 829, writing of Egidius, says:—"*C'était un religieux non moins pieux que docte, né de pauvres cultivateurs. A cette époque, il n'est pas d'homme comme un Pape pour découvrir le mérite, même quand il se cache dans la prison d'un cloître. Jules II. tira notre moine de son monastére, et l'employa comme légat a Venise et à Naples. La chaire convenait mieux au moine que la cour. Il y monta donc pour rem-*

the cardinalate in 1517—the very year of Luther's disgrace—whom another Pope, Clement VII, consecrated VIth Latin patriarch of Constantinople, and afterwards (1532) called to Rome solely that he, with another of his Order, Father Niccola Scu-

plir une oeuvre toute catholique, pour prêcher une croisade contre ce Turc qui ne pouvait laisser un seul jour de repos à la chrétienté. Un historien compare la parole de l'orateur tantôt à un torrent qui entraîne l'auditeur, tantôt à une sirène qui séduit et endort les grands et la peuple, le docte et l'ignorant, l'homme et la femme, le vieillard et l'adolescent. Egidius était, poète, historien, philosophe, théologien, linguiste. Il savait l'hébreu, le chaldéen, le grec, le latin. Ajoutez, pour connaître pleinement cette nature d'homme, qu'aussitôt sa tâche remplie, il allait bien vite se cacher dans sa solitude. Quant à son discours prononcé au concile oecuménique de Latran, Jacques Sadolet s'empressa de l'envoyer à son ami Pierre Bembe; c'étaient les deux plus parfaits humanistes de leur époque. Tous deux ils appelaient Egidius de Viterbe la plus éclatante lumière de leur siècle, et disaient que, si par malheur les lettres et la politesse humaines avaient péri, elles pourraient être représentées par ce seul homme. Une vingtaine d'années auparavant, Egidius de Viterbe, évangélisant les peuples d'Italie, leur avait annoncé plus d'une fois qu'ils verraient de grandes agitations, de grandes calamités dans l'Eglise, mais ensuite aussi un commencement de restauration. Cette sorte de prophétie, qu'on se rappelait, le fit choisir pour faire le discours d'ouverture du concile qui devait remédier à ces maux. Egidius les décrit avec une latinité tout-à-fait cicéronienne, mais où les considérations historiques ne sont pas toujours aussi solides que le style est élégant. Il insiste sur la nécessité et l'utilité des conciles, fait l'éloge du pape Jules, et implore l'assistance de saint Pierre et de saint Paul sur l'assemblée, pour pacifier les princes chrétiens, défendre la chrétienté contre les mahométans, et rendre a l'Eglise son ancienne splendeur et pureté."

In a letter to the emperor Maximilian, Pope Leo X. terms him —a man of surpassing integrity of life, of religion, and of learning—"*is est eximia integritate, religione, doctrina, omniumque prope linguarum quae nunc quidem excoluntur, usum atque scientiam, omniumque bonarum artium disciplinas cognitas et explicatas, habet.*" A similar eulogy is given by Pope Julius II.

tellio, might oversee the translation of some Greek *codices* into Latin? Indeed if Luther's Order sided with him, it must have been when he was an humble religious. In very truth such recognition would then have been no wonder.

But it is not likely that Egidius of Viterbo, who had been superior-general from 1507 to 1518, should have shown him, the apostate, other favor than that of recognizing openly and honestly his demerits. This, however, is no more than we could expect of him. But what may we not say of another superior-general,—of Jerome Seripandus? Maybe he favored Luther? He was most assuredly one of the "principal members" of Luther's order. Gioberti says of him, that if the Augustinian Order had no other sages than the cardinals,—Seripandus, Noris, and Egidius of Viterbo,—it would even then have more than enough to make the world eternally its debtor. Could then so wise a man as Seripandus even pretend to favor the newly-fledged party across the Alps?—or could one so learned, one who was master of all knowledge, sacred and profane, of languages, of antiquities, be fascinated even for a moment with the phantoms of the ancient heresies he had in class so often demolished? In a word, could he who had sat in the Ecumenical Council of Trent, as cardinal legate *a latere*, who in that Council was one of the chief pillars of the Church,* prudent, zealous, a fountain

* The historian Pallavicini, S. J., in his "*Histoire du Concile de Trente*," thus eulogizes the gifted Seripandus: "*Il etait bien éloigné de cette ambition qui fait désirer aux hommes toute espèce de primauté, et surtout à ceux qui se trouvent déjà dans les premiers*

of wisdom, a very giant in intellect, almost an angel in virtue, loved as he was by people and pontiffs, esteemed, revered, honored by the Church when living, and mourned by the Church when dead,—could such as he have even faltered in his Faith, could he have so demerited the esteem of the faithful, wronged the love of his fellow-bishops, and betrayed the confidence of Pontiffs in his sterling zeal, his superhuman firmness against the errors of his day, could such as he, so virtuous, so gifted, yet so humble, have, even for a moment, dallied with the enemies of Christ, who were seeking again to buffet Him, in the person of his Spouse, the Church,—to sell Him, as of old, to His persecutors, not, in truth, for gold and silver, but for greed and sensuality,—then, indeed, might we well lose all trust in human virtue. Such a betrayal

rangs." l. III. p. 182. "*Le pape Pie IV lui donna le chapeau plutôt pour exercer ses talents que pour les récompenser, voulant qu'il travaillât en qualité de légat à l'heureuse conclusion du concile à qui il avait, dans les commencements, sous Paul III, apporté le tribut et l'appui de ces grandes lumiéres en qualité de général de son ordre. Notre histoire est pleine, en plusiers endroits, de ce qu'il fit a Trente dans ces deux états, par son savoir, par sa prudence, par son zèle, et par son exemple. On pourrait croire qu'il fut maltraité pour la fortune, puisque elle lui refusa de voir terminer cet édifice dont il avait été l'un des principaux architectes, si l'on ne se rappelait que la fortune c'est Dieu même, et qu'à l'égard des âmes vertueuses, le plaisir qu'elles goûtaient sur la terre d'être témoins des progrès de la religion, s'augmente, loin de cesser, quand il les leur fait voir au haut de cieux.*" III. 194.

During the Council—"*il fut chargé de s'informer auprès des prélats sages et pieux quelles seraient à leur avis les réformes les plus propres à rendre à l'Eglise son ancienne beauté et à fermer la bouche à ses ennemies.*" l. II., 1062.

would not have been, 'tis true, for the first time. For while man lives, his battle is not over. The crown is never gained till the victory is lost. In one sole unguarded moment he may lose the toil of years. Solomon, the wisest of mortals, betrayed the Lord of Hosts for sensuality, and Judas the disciple, for greed; and until death has set his seal upon the brow, and the soul meets its Creator before the judgment-seat, man's peril is not over. But that "Luther's Order, with all its principal members, were his warmest advocates," cannot be. It cannot be that Seripandus at Trent, that Egidius at the Lateran, that Arnoldi in Germany, that Flandino in Italy, that Richardot in France, that the legions of their brethren in other lands, should have failed their Faith, or supported Luther's party,—that the verdict of posterity, based on the monuments of the past, attested by the traditions of their Faith, the record of their zeal, and confirmed by the almost unanimous avowal of contemporaries, of their valor, of their piety, of their prudence, of their wisdom, of their sanctity, and of their heroism, should be undeserved. If "Luther's order, with its principal members, were his warmest advocates," it must have been the kind of advocacy the martyrs showed their persecutors, in that through them they had a chance to witness to their Faith; it must have been the kind of advocacy the Confessors had for the errors they exposed, the vices they rebuked, and the tyrants they defied, in that they too were able thus to be heroes, although not unto the shedding of their

blood; it must have been the kind of advocacy one has at times for the sufferings the Lord sends those He loves, to test their love, or for the temptations he permits, to prove their constancy; but that "Luther's order, with its principal members," with its Martyrs in England, who thanked the hand that struck them, and blessed the sword that drank their blood; with its Confessors in Germany, who embraced with joy the chance their revilers gave them to manifest their zeal; with its Apostles in Spain, and in France, and in Italy, who everywhere rallied the faithful around the Cross; that this Order, with its saints of every rank, men and women of high and low degree, who are now honored at the altars of Holy Church, were in any other sense the "warmest advocates" he had, conflicts, to say the least, with history, which is infallible, and wrongs common sense, which never errs.

And this was the Order to which St. Thomas belonged. His virtues were reflected on them and gave them greater lustre, while their merits showed that in His gifts the Lord had not been partial.

And now that the light of Faith was no longer hidden from view by the sins of men, but beamed forth clear and radiant from every part of His Holy Church, from her cloisters and her cathedrals, from her hermitages and her abbeys; from her children of every age and sex; from the matron and the maiden; from the youth and from old age; from her martyrs and from her saints, who grouped around her and called their Mother

blessed, who delighted to show again to the nations of the world by their new life, that the Lord was not asleep, nor yet to be derided; that the beacon-fires of His Spirit had been kindled anew on the watch-towers of His holy mountains, around which had circled the storm-clouds of heresy and crime, and which had borne the brunt of the infernal onset, and had warded off the darts of sin that played around, shivering in their fury the mightiest that were beneath their power, yet leaving in their impotency unscathed those others who were above; now that the Christian people once more gave earnest of the spirit of true reform within them, and flying to the mountains for safety from this deluge crowded round their saints in every land from Caledonia to Carthage, from Corinth to Cadiz, who, like landmarks above the plain of sin, towered far aloft as guides to Heaven, one might see again, brightening as of old, the light of Faith in every bosom, renewed the fountain of Hope in every breast, and freshened the fire of Charity in every heart. One too might see the child of Religion more earnest in its commands, more zealous in his piety, more fruitful in all good works. For the buyers and sellers had now been cast out of the Temple of the Lord; saints now were where demons once had reigned, and the House of the Lord was once again unto all men the house of prayer.

But this sketch of the Great Reformation would not be complete, unless were shown too, how public, how authoritative, how final, and how com-

plete, was the universal reform in the Church from sin to virtue, and from error to belief. The Church, now that her children had done their part, was in turn to do hers. The Spirit of the Most High which had quickened unto new life even the outermost members of His Body, in Austria and in Poland, in England and in Spain, and had given them new being, and had breathed into them the breath of His Spirit, did not leave untouched the Head. It was now the moment, the crisis after the battle, through which men had just now passed, that an instant and a unanimous avowal was required of the Church, of the Faith that was within her, and that demanded a no less unanimous condemnation of the errors that were out of her. And glorious beyond all past avowals, arose the universal voice of Christendom, which in 1563 gave utterance to that Profession of Faith which has ever since been re-echoed full and clear from her loftiest mountains in every land, lessening, maybe, in the distance, as in our own times, by reason of its adverse currents of impiety, yet growing stronger again, as with the dying out of old time spites and feuds, the wind changes,—the voice that is never feeble, never indistinct, always sure and certain,—the voice that is hearkened to in every clime and in every age up to the present day,—the voice of God speaking through His Vicar, the successor of St. Peter, the Head of His Church. Again did the Church proclaim the divinity of the Sacred Scriptures, God's own Word, which the heretics would deny; again did she declare the

sacredness of Tradition, which sophistry would spurn; again did she confess the misery brought on man by the first and original sin, which, because too humiliating to their pride, bad men would not admit, and with all this, she openly avowed the doctrine of the nature and action of Divine Grace and of God's Justification of His saints; the integrity of His holy Sacraments; the verity of His own Body and Blood in the Blessed Sacrifice of the Mass, and the veneration of His saints, which even the pagan had allowed as just, and which only a libertine would, through very shame, deny. And no wonder then came reform with Faith—the reform of bishops, the reform of clerics, the reform of monks, and the reform, in fine, of every class of Christian faithful. Glorious in very truth was this voice of the Most High, given clear and divine, not with thunder and lightning as on Mount Sinai, but repeated with every accent of His love, and in all His mildness, as on Calvary.

And this was the voice of God at Trent, at the greatest of all councils that had ever been; the seventeenth time that, since the Church began at Jerusalem, He had spoken to His Spouse in all His majesty, and to His people in all His authority. But yet was this not the only council of the time of St. Thomas. There had been councils of the whole Church, and so too should there now be councils in every part of that Church, that the voice of the Lord might not be heard with uncertain sound, but be repeated to every province of each kingdom, and to every diocese of each pro-

vince, and to each parish of each diocese. Consequently there were those of every country. Each had its own, and though the Council of Trent, the grandest of all, was the one that gave the tone to all others after it, as had that of the Lateran to those immediately before it, yet did the faithful—like the children of Israel, when travelling to the Holy Land—flock from every part of the Christian world around their head, and bow with reverence to him, as those others had not done to theirs. Beside the two Ecumenical Councils of this century, viz: one of the Lateran and that other one of Trent, were eight minor ones in Italy; six at Milan, in the years 1565, '69, '73, '76, '79, '82; one at Benevento in 1545 and the eighth at Aquileia in 1596; in France—seventeen, severally at Paris, in 1528, at Toulouse in 1590, at Avignon in 1509 and another in 1594, at Treves in 1548, at Bordeaux in 1583, at Cambrai in 1565, at Rouen in 1522, in 1527, and in 1581; at Bourges in 1528 and another in 1584, at Rheims in 1564, and in 1583; at Aix in 1585, at Lyons in 1528, and a national one at Tours in 1510; in Poland—two, both at Peterkau, one in 1510 and the other in 1539; in Belgium—three, two at Cologne, one in 1536, the other in 1549, and the third at Mechlin in 1570; in Ireland—one, at Dublin in 1518; in Spain—four, at Toledo, Saragossa, Valentia, and Salamanca, all in the same year, viz: 1565. On the Rhine were four, at Osnabruck, Mentz, and Munster, in the same year, viz: 1538, and the fourth at Augsburg in 1548; in Mexico there was one in 1525, and—the very last of

all—one* other, termed in Church History the Diamperitana, in the Far East, in 1599, at Goa, in India, of the "Christians of St. Thomas," so called through a loving remembrance they bore for the Apostle, and presided over by the venerable archbishop of Goa and Primate of the East Indies, the Augustinian Alexius de Menesez, and this last closed the century. All of these, after Trent, sought to follow what it had laid down, viz: to remodel discipline, to reform manners, to correct abuses, to condemn errors, and to restore the Church to its ancient beauty and simpleness.

With the preceding *résumé*, then, of the councils of the Church, this sketch of the XVIth century may now end. Heresy had now been worsted; the truth of Faith was again triumphant; people breathed freer, and with a firmer assurance that the Lord was truly with them, while on their part His holy mountains, all the while, fairly danced with joy at such a universal show of virtue; in Germany, of faith, which from the very beginning had been severely tried with scoffs, and gibes, and all manner of unbelief; in England, of constancy, that had been assailed by blows, not words, and repelled by the arguments of the rack, the stake, and the gibbet; in France, of prudence, with all her sister virtues, that had now taken place once more over

* This is believed to be a correct list of all the councils and synods of the XVIth century. It has been taken chiefly from *Henrion* and *Berti*. The synodal Acts of the "*Diamperitana*" were printed at Rome in 1745, with notes by Father Jean Facunde Raulin, O. S. A. *Berti, Hist. Ecclesiast. Compend.* vol. II. p. 162.

turbulence, and deceit, and intrigue; in Italy, of zeal and piety, that had so long been choked and bruised by sinful games and cruel wars; in Spain, of charity, fruitful in good works, which had been so sorely tested by unseemly arrogance and wanton barbarities on her people; and in the whole of Christendom, of joy, that now at least there was, in very truth, complete reform, visible, clear, and lasting.

Great had been the causes which developed it,—some of them fatal to the fairest portions of the Church, most of them disastrous to all virtue, and all of them scandalous to the faithful, in the highest degree. Yet as the Lord is always wont to bring some good out of every evil, so in this century He seemed to have lavished His graces upon the age, —great reformers, great saints of every class, laic and ecclesiastic; zealous the one, heroic the other; and greatest among the great, our own St. Thomas, the chief over all, the first great reformer of his age; the reformer of virtue among the people, the reformer of monastic discipline in the cloister, and the reformer of bishops in charity and zeal. Not assuredly, however, are all the reforms of the XVIth century claimed as his. Many they were, and many were the reformers. Yet who can dare to measure where his influence—the first of all—began, or where it stopped? Great indeed it must have been, even from his earliest youth; felt alike in the hamlet, and revered in the court; spreading and widening with his years, strong and sure, till far beyond the olive-girt hills of his own Valencia,

it neared the Tyrol, and hovering there, amid the Alpine valleys, rising and lowering with his prayers, settled down over the assembled Fathers of the Church. Who can say that his spirit then, as the sun which at dawn first lifts the mountain-peaks, even the loftiest, from the gloom of night, and then the lowliest hills, and after bathes the plain in all the richness of his glory, may not have greatly aided in drawing down from Heaven, where his spirit loved to dwell, all its holiest graces,—counsel, wisdom, understanding, together with all the kindred gifts of the Spirit of the Most High,—of that Spirit which in the Council beamed down upon its members, and gave them life, then light, then love, and which from that Council was wafted by them to their convent-homes, their parishes, their sees, even to the farthest corner of the earth? All this is not for us to say. We, so far removed from such a height of grace, may not presume to penetrate the light which girded him, nor may we dare to fathom the counsels of the Lord in raising him so high. When Moses went to Sinai, his people saw him mount; they knew he was with God, yet durst not follow, save with their prayers. All then that we may do, who like them are on the plain, yet strive so hard to mount on high, is to pray trustingly with him; await with humble hope his intercessions with the Lord; follow obediently his guidance through this our "Desert of Sin," that so we too may climb, in God's own time, the steeps that now separate us from our "Promised Land."

The Life of St. Thomas of Villanova, given in the present volume, is now for the first time presented to the American public, and in an American dress. It is a *verbatim* reprint from the London edition, translated by the Oratorian Fathers, and published by Richardson and Son, in 1847.

In the Preface to that edition, (subscribed by "F. W. Faber,") is merely stated that the work is one of the "Series of Modern Saints," which was being given at that time to the English speaking Catholics, and a translation from the French Life by Father Claude Maimbourg, an Augustinian, which had been published at Paris in 1659. In the present volume the few foot notes are taken chiefly from the "Memoirs of Illustrious Augustinians" during the last six centuries, by Father Giuseppe Lanteri, O. S. A. (Tolentine 1859,) and from Henrion's "*Storia Universale della Chiesa.*"

T. C. MIDDLETON, O. S. A.

VILLANOVA COLLEGE,
Feast of St. Monica, 1874.

THE LIFE

OF

ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE BIRTH OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA, AND THE INCLINATION TO ASSIST THE POOR WHICH HE DISPLAYED IN HIS EARLY YOUTH.

ST. THOMAS of Villanova was born in Spain, in the year of grace 1488. His birth-place was a village called Fluentplan, near Villanova, a town of some note in the district of Montiel and diocese of Toledo. The nobility of his parents sprung from the exercise of virtue and sanctity of life, rather than from a long descent. They were simple people of the middle class; and their ancestors, who from time immemorial had professed the Catholic Faith, had bequeathed a fair name to their family, but had not cared to leave behind them any extraordinary store of wealth. But for all this

they were well-to-do in the world. They had enough to support their condition honestly, and they contented themselves with what our Lord had given them.

His father was called Alphonso Thomas Garcia. He was a pious man, and of spotless morals. As he possessed good feeling, and was easy and affable, many men resorted to him for advice in their difficulties; but chiefly the poor villagers, to whom he was in the habit of lending grain for seed, or for their support until harvest-time, when they punctually repaid what they had borrowed.

His mother's name was Lucia Martinez. She was very modest and retiring, and carried engraved upon her face the image of the devotion which breathed through her heart. She assisted regularly at the Divine Office, frequented the Sacraments, and never neglected her hours of mental prayer. But of all the religious exercises, to which she devoted herself with so much careful attention, she was most remarkable for charity towards the poor. This she practised with so much love and tenderness, that our Saint in after years, looking back with admiration to his mother's virtues, was wont to disclose to his more intimate friends, that God, in consideration of her compassion towards the

indigent, had bestowed upon him graces and favors so remarkable as to amount almost to a miracle. And thus Juan Mugnatones, a brother of his order, who was bishop of Segovia, used to say of him, that he never spoke of his mother's piety without expressing the same sentiments towards her that St. Augustine entertained towards his mother, St. Monica, and has published in his Confessions, where he sets forth his obligations to her goodness.

Such was the mother of St. Thomas. From her our Saint appeared to inherit the gift of prayer, piety, and compassion towards the poor, and to add to them the judgment and probity of his father. Our Lord vouchsafed to unite in the son the virtues of both parents, and rendered him in a short time a perfect and accomplished model of them all.

St. Augustine, speaking of the care which his mother took to rear him in the love and fear of God, remarks amongst other things, that she often had the holy name of Jesus on her tongue, in order that he might learn to pronounce it betimes, and to invoke it in his little wants with the lisping accents of infancy. The result of this holy diligence was, that the sacred Name became so deeply imprinted in his heart, that in after years, when his judg-

ment had been clouded by Manichean errors, he could not relish the lectures of heathen philosophers and orators, because they did not contain the name of Jesus, which he afterwards found so frequently in the Epistles of St. Paul; and thus his entire conversion happily ensued. In the same way the mother of our St. Thomas knew of what importance it was in the education of the young, to give them good principles, and early to impress them with all that they ought to retain; and, therefore, to the first sentiments of piety with which she inspired her son, she endeavored to join a tender devotion to the most holy Name of Jesus, and to that of the Blessed Virgin, feeding his heart with respect and love towards the Queen of heaven, at the same time that she nourished his body with its first food; and so happy were the effects, that it was remarked of all the graces which he received from God through the intercession of Mary, the sovereign dispenser of favors, that the most distinguished were conferred upon him on some one of her festivals. For example, he took the habit of religion on the day of our Lady's Presentation, he received the episcopal dignity on her glorious Assumption, and he quitted this world on the feast of her Nativity.

His inclination to frequent churches and spend as much time in them as he was able, may also be ascribed to the good example of his mother. Like another Samuel, whom God had chosen to dwell in His presence, he began as soon as he could walk, to offer his first steps and first words in the temple, where he used to say his prayers and to serve mass with a behaviour quite unlike a child. It was his delight to sweep the church, and to deck the altars, and to find employment of this sacred kind; and the persons in charge of the church used to set the young Saint to work, as much to satisfy his requests, as for the sake of gaining his services. His father and mother, who sought only the glory of God in their son, were overjoyed at these indications of an inclination towards the priesthood or a religious life; and they sent him to school at the age of seven, where he learnt to read and write, and went through the other ordinary branches of education. Before he had been long at school, he displayed tokens of the vivacity of his spirit, which engaged the attention of his master. The solidity of his judgment drew forth particular admiration; for he possessed sound sense, and conducted himself with so grave a demeanor, that he kept his compan-

ions to their duties by his mere presence. He never accosted any who were not distinguished for modesty, and when he found none in his own humor, he used to go straight home or to the church, and all his pleasure out of school was found in one or the other.

The love of our Saint towards the poor was displayed very early, and from his little alms it was easy to judge how much he would afterwards do to solace their afflictions. Instead of eating his breakfast, he generally gave it to the poor whom he met on his way to school; and not content with taking the food from his own mouth for their support, he often pulled off his clothes and gave them to poor children, as a protection against cold and nakedness. His mother, so far from reproving him on these occasions, praised God within herself, and used to pray that He who had inspired these first movements of piety and compassion towards His members, would bless her son the more for them, and would deign to bring him to perfection, which she only desired for His glory.

As he was coming from school one day, when he was about eight years old, he overtook a poor peasant who seemed very sad, and was afraid to enter the house, because

he had not brought back all the corn which our Saint's father had lent him the previous year. The child advanced with a gay and open countenance, and demanded the reason of his sadness. The villager knew him, and disclosed all his grief; the year had been a very bad one, and he was consequently quite unable to repay all at once the corn he had borrowed last seed-time, and he feared that what he had with him would not be accepted as an instalment, and that he should henceforth forfeit the benefits which he had hitherto enjoyed. This recital made a deep impression on the child's heart. "Come," he exclaimed to the poor man; "come at once and let me see the truth of what you say; for if you really have so scanty a supply of grain, and if you are not able to return what you have borrowed of my father, be sure that God will find a remedy for your misfortune." So they went together, and he found that the poor man's story was evidently true. The child then retraced his steps, and throwing himself at his father's feet, he described the misery of the poor debtor who could not pay all that he owed, and even, in returning a portion of it, had left scarce any food for his destitute family; and he implored his father, by the name of our Lord, to take

what the poor man had brought, and to wait for the remainder until he could conveniently pay it. His father, overcome by so moving a petition, was unable to hear him out. He was filled with joy to hear his son express sentiments so good and generous. That very instant he went to the door, to find the poor peasant, and to offer him consolation; and he forthwith cancelled the debt, and promised to continue his assistance whenever the poor man stood in need of help.

CHAPTER II.

HE IS SENT TO STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALCALA, AND MAKES RAPID PROGRESS IN VIRTUE AND LEARNING.

AT the age of twelve his father and mother sent him to study at the university at Alcalà. They wished him to make advances in literature; for they gathered from the bright indications of goodness and talent which he had displayed, that he was destined for the service of our Lord, and that he would one day rise to eminence in the Church. The result answered their expectations. On quitting Villanova he knew nothing at all of the Latin language; and yet he had not been

long at Alcalà before he made himself a perfect master of it. He passed with success through the Humanity classes. His progress in Rhetoric, Philosophy, and Theology, was quite surprising. But although the advance he made in all the sciences taught at the university drew all eyes upon him, it was his humility above all the rest which elicited the admiration both of masters and scholars. During the sixteen years which he spent at Alcalà and Salamanca, learning himself and teaching others, he never uttered a single word to his own advantage or the prejudice of his neighbor. He never let fall one bitter or misplaced word, whoever might contradict him; and while arguing in the schools, amidst the heats of debate, he preserved as much composure as when alone in his chamber. The humility which he preserved while surrounded with applauding friends gained the love and esteem of all hearts, insomuch that respect for his virtue often procured him to be chosen referee in cases of great difficulty, where the cleverest of the university had failed of success, and his charity and inclination towards peace found means to compose differences which were quite unknown to the wisdom of the flesh.

He was very pure and chaste, and Father James Montiel, his confessor, deposed publicly, that he had never permitted the precious lily of his chastity to wither, but had kept it pure and whole even to the tomb. To preserve this celestial virtue, which he knew to be the gift of God, he devoted himself to frequent prayer, as well as to meditation and other spiritual exercises, and he endeavored to act up to the advice St. Jerome gave Rufinus, "To avoid idleness as the mother of vices." To this end he occupied all his time in reading, praying, studying and conversing with his friends about what he had read or learnt; in order that the devil, finding him so engaged, might not be able to enter his soul, and to assail it and involve it in his snares. To this remedy the young Saint added the practice of another virtue equally calculated to guard him from an evil which he dreaded more than death itself. The mortification of his body was continual. He wore himself down with fasting and hair-cloth, and the frequent use of the discipline, and subdued his flesh, as though he regarded it as an enemy, which he was resolved to render perfectly supple and obedient to his spirit.

While he was thus employed in laboring

for his salvation, his father, who had done all he could by good works to secure his own, passed from this world to the other, leaving his property to his wife and son. As soon as the news reached St. Thomas, he set off for Villanova, that he might arrange his family affairs, and console his mother by his presence. In both objects he was equally successful. After having read his father's will, he told his mother, with great simplicity, that he had no wish for his share of the property; that he willingly resigned it to her for her support, to enable her to live comfortably in her state of widowhood; and that, as for himself, his thoughts and desires were fixed upon heavenly riches, not on those of the earth, which he despised and renounced with all his heart, for the love of his Lord, and a wish to imitate His example.

This noble conduct had so much effect upon his mother, that, though but seventeen years of age, he induced her to adopt his sentiments, persuading her to turn their house into an hospital for the poor, and to employ all her means in lodging, feeding, and entertaining them. Our Lord, who spoke to her by the voice of her son, rewarded her cheerful acquiescence to His wishes by bestowing on her some very remarkable favors and

graces, having even sometimes miraculously multiplied the provisions of the hospital, for the pilgrims and other poor people who resorted to her for relief. On account of her profuse and tender charity, she was honored with the title of "Mother of the Poor."

Her son, who was truly the father of the poor, making them, while living, his heirs, returned to Alcalà, where he made such progress, both in virtue and knowledge, that his instructors in the university (especially a celebrated professor named John of Vergana) who knew his humility, proposed him to their scholars for imitation, as if he had been already a saint canonized by the Church.

At the early age of twenty-six he lectured publicly in philosophy, and amongst the numerous auditors who were afterwards celebrated for their piety and doctrine, there was one of particular celebrity, named Dominic Soto, whom Spain reckons amongst the most illustrious of her theologians.

When these lectures were concluded he was offered a vacant place in the college of St. Ildephonsus in Alcalà. Those who had the right of presentation, wished to show their high sense of his merits by presenting him, unsolicited, to a situation which was usually obtained by powerful interest. The

doctors of Alcalà had hoped by this obligation to keep him with them, and to make him one of the heads of their body. However, they were soon deprived of him, for the university of Salamanca, the first in Spain, having heard of his virtue and extraordinary acquirements, invited him there to teach morality. He went, not so much for the emolument, as to satisfy their earnest wishes, and to show his feeling of the honor done him. His principal object was to execute the design he had formed of giving himself more entirely to God, as soon as he could honestly disengage himself from his studies. To prepare for the retreat from the world which he meditated, he gave himself more than ever to prayer, fasting, mortification of the senses, and assisting the necessitous and the miserable. He had an especial compassion for poor scholars, charitably giving them all he could spare, to help them to continue their studies, employing for this object the profit of his labors, scarcely reserving for himself as much as was necessary for his subsistence.

CHAPTER III.

HE TAKES THE HABIT IN THE ORDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

ALTHOUGH our holy professor lived in the world as not belonging to it, and, to speak in the language of the apostle, used the world as not using it, knowing that the fashion of it passes away, he resolved to go out of it entirely, and to shelter himself from its waves and tempests in the secure and peaceful harbor of a religious life. Nevertheless, with his accustomed prudence and caution, he determined not to be precipitate in so important an affair; but recommending it to God with many prayers and tears, he spared no pains to make himself acquainted with the spirit and the rules of several orders, that he might judge for which he was the best fitted. At length, after a long and careful examination, our Lord, who knows what is good for us better than we do ourselves, called him by a strong inspiration into the order of St. Augustine.

He said nothing to his friends respecting his intention, nor did he disclose it even to

his mother, much as he loved and honored her. He feared she might divert him from his purpose; and from the manner in which she wrote to him after his profession, it appears he was right in his conjecture. She entirely approved of his resolution to leave the world, and thanked God from the depths of her soul, that her beloved son was so entirely devoted to His service, but with a mother's fond affection she had set her heart upon his entering the monastery of Hucles of the order of St. Jerome, that she might sometimes have the consolation of seeing him, instead of his removing to a distance where she would be deprived of that pleasure.

In order then to prevent these, and other obstacles, which flesh and blood might have raised, from strangling his design in its birth, he went immediately to Father Francis of Para, superior of the Augustinians of Salamanca, humbly requesting the habit. He was received at the age of thirty, on the day of the Presentation of our Lady, having expressly chosen this day from a feeling of respect and tenderness towards the Blessed Virgin, and with an earnest hope that it might please God to bless the offering he made of himself, in consideration and by the

merits of the rich present which she that day made of herself in the Temple.

Crusenius, one of our most celebrated authors, speaking of the time of Luther's fatal apostasy, remarks in his Chronicles, that the same year, nay, the very same day that the devil enticed that monster from the religious order which he had professed, our Lord, by a particular conduct of His Providence, called St. Thomas into it; as if in some manner to repair the injury the one did to the Church, by the honor and advantage it would receive from the other.

The manner in which he made his exercises in the very beginning of his novitiate, proved the holiness of his vocation. His humility, his devotion, his exact obedience, his silence and recollection were such, that not only the young, but even those who had grown gray in the practices of regularity, could not contemplate him without some sort of confusion, seeing a novice begin where the most perfect in a religious life are accustomed to end.

The virtues which drew on him this admiration, and which served as the basis and foundation of the spiritual edifice which he raised in his novitiate, were continual prayer, and a very extraordinary and deep humility.

He remained in prayer from the end of Matins to the hour of Prime; and after Prime, till it was necessary to return to the choir to sing Tierce and Sext, he read books of devotion, attaching himself especially to the works of St. Bernard, which he relished more than the writings of any other Father. This predilection is easily accounted for, when we consider the similarity of spirit existing between them, shown so clearly in their works. This reading, with which he nourished his soul, and enlivened his devotion in his cell, at the foot of the crucifix, did not prevent him in his year of probation, from going through his theological studies again, and reading with the utmost attention to refresh his memory. He well knew how useful and necessary scholastic knowledge is to discover the mysteries of faith, and when discovered, to impress them deeply on the mind.

He continued to pursue this system, and was afterwards often heard to say, that the good religious studies while he prays, and prays while he studies. According to the author whose history we follow, it was from the time of his arrival at Alcalà, that he began to unite study with prayer, and prayer with study, in such a manner that they almost made one single exercise.

The other virtue, for which he became equally remarkable, was a most profound humility. Here was a man, who, at the age of thirty, was a licentiate in theology, and who had acquired by his virtue and merit a high reputation in two universities, where he had taught with much success and applause; yet, who renouncing the profit and the glory that his public lectures invariably drew upon him, was always the first at the exercises which are commonly used to try the submission of the brother novices. Whatever he did was done with so much love and alacrity, that his master was filled with astonishment and admiration.

He was a great lover of retirement and silence. To so great an extent did he carry these virtues, that had it not been noticed that he was ever ready to leave his beloved solitude at the call of charity, and to converse with those who needed spiritual advice, it would have been thought that he was close and uncommunicative from natural disposition, rather than from principle.

Besides the fasts of the order, which he kept with the same exactness as those of the Church, he imposed on himself, with the consent of his superior, several others of devotion; fasting generally three quarters

of the year. On other days he ate as the rest of the community, but with so much restraint and moderation, that he always deprived himself of something, from the habit he had acquired in his penitential practices. His love of mortification was not confined to fasting. For although this is a very excellent means of keeping the body in subjection, it was not enough to satisfy him. He afflicted his body by the privation of everything which could gratify it, in order to subdue it entirely, and to render it supple and obedient to the laws of reason. He slept only four, or at most, five hours; and during Lent and Advent his bed was a single plank. The rest of the year it consisted of a straw mattress and two simple coverlets. These habits he continued even after he became archbishop.

Such were his principles and his virtues, and such were the foundations which this devoted and fervent novice laid for the spiritual edifice, on which he ceased not to labor incessantly, until he had elevated it to that degree of perfection which we shall contemplate in the sequel of this history.

CHAPTER IV.

OF HIS CONDUCT IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE RULES AFTER HIS PROFESSION, AND OF HIS ELEVATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

THE year of probation being passed, the day for which he so ardently longed, when he should devote himself entirely to the service of God by his solemn profession, at length arrived.

He made the vows to his Lord with an extreme delight; rivers of tears flowing from his eyes; a testimony of the joy with which his soul was filled at the sacrifice he was making of his whole being to his God. The same spiritual joy was even afterwards shed abroad in his soul, when he recalled to mind the graces and mercies he received from his good God on the happy day of his profession. And even when he assisted at the profession of others, he could not prevent abundance of tears from flowing, at the thought of the blessings they were then receiving, and those he had formally received himself.

After he was professed, he omitted none of the exercises of the novitiate. On the

contrary, being persuaded, (as is indeed true,) that to perform the promises he had made to God, he must tend more and more to perfection; he kept continually impressed upon his mind, that the progress he had hitherto made in his holy career, was nothing in comparison with what he had yet to attain. And thus, as if he were but a beginner, he applied himself with more fervor and devotion than ever to the practice of every virtue, and especially to that of charity. Not that this divine virtue, which was, as it were, the soul of every other virtue in which this Saint excelled, began to be practised by him only after his profession. By no means. He had always loved and practised it even in his childhood, as I have elsewhere related; yet, it had lain dormant, a captive and prisoner in the solitude of the novitiate. But as soon as he was at liberty to exercise it without prejudice to obedience, he set himself to attend on the sick with all imaginable fervor and humility. He remained in the infirmary as much as possible, to assist and console the poor sufferers. He prepared their food, he swept the room, made their beds, washed them, and rendered them every service in his power, without waiting for the orders of the superiors, who soon perceived that his excessive

charity prompted him to make these visits of his own accord.

He was always anxious to be the first to undertake the most vile and abject occupations in the monastery, endeavoring to anticipate the wishes and requests of those who needed his assistance.

To exhort others to imitate him in these pious cares, he said sometimes to his friends, speaking to them in a familiar manner, and even in chapter to his religious, when he became superior, that the infirmary was like the bush of Moses, where he who devotes himself to the sick will assuredly find God among the thorns with which he will be surrounded. Where will a man find so many opportunities of practising the admirable virtues of patience, humility, and love, as among the crosses and trials which await him at every turn, at the bedside of the sick? Our Saint was so assiduous in his tender attentions to the poor invalids, and gained their love and esteem to such a degree, that they looked upon him and listened to him, as an angel sent from God, if not to cure, at least to strengthen and console them in their sufferings.

But whilst thus employed, our Lord destined him for other and more important

duties, by which he could serve Him better, and bring more glory to His name. For this end he commanded him, through his superiors, to prepare for Holy Orders. He was ordained priest at the age of thirty-three, some time after his profession, and celebrated his first mass on Christmas day, with an inexpressible tenderness and devotion. He was completely absorbed in the contemplation of the favors and mercies that this Infant God brought to man by His birth; and remained in this state for some time, without being able to rouse himself. The meditation on this adorable mystery drew floods of tears from his eyes when he came to the hymn of the angels, Gloria in Excelsis, and to those wonderful words of the Preface, *Quia per Incarnati Verbi mysterium.* These feelings of tenderness for the birth of our Lord, were so deeply impressed on his heart, that he always fell into transports and ecstasies whenever he offered the adorable Sacrifice on this holy day. When he was archbishop, he was accustomed to celebrate the two first masses of Christmas in his chapel, that none but his almoners might witness those divine operations which passed in his soul, and which he could not conceal because of the brightness and splendor which were spread over

his countenance. After having finished his two masses, he retired into his oratory till the hour of office, when he went to the church to celebrate high mass. He usually performed this, being archbishop, with the same humility and modesty of apparel as he did when a simple religious. It is impossible to read with any degree of attention, the sermons he has left to the public upon the mysteries of this sacred night, without catching some sparks from that fire of devotion which this holy prelate breathed at the sight of the cradle and the infancy of Jesus.

Such, then, was the beginning of his priesthood; and the end was conformable with the beginning. In every situation of his life he had loved retirement and prayer; but after he was elevated to the dignity of priest, and every day allowed, by the honor and obligation of his character, to approach the table of the Lord, he endeavored to make himself more and more worthy by redoubling his devotions. He assisted night and day in the choir, and in every necessary duty in the community. Nor was he less assiduous in his attentions to the sick. All his remaining time was employed in preparing for mass, except a small portion which he allotted to his studies.

From the time that he first frequented the schools, he had acquired the habit of often making a serious examination of his feelings and conduct, to discover whether he had advanced or fallen back in the way of the spiritual life. He continued the same practice after he was a religious, and performed it with still greater exactness when he became a priest, from the more fervent desire he had of attaining to perfection. He used to say, that it is a bad sign in a priest when he is seen every day to approach the altar without becoming better or more holy; confirming his words by this saying of St. Bernard, "The religious who does not advance in the way of God, recedes." It was for this reason he so carefully practised a daily examen, and recommended it to others, as a most important and necessary exercise for those who have any real regard for their salvation.

It was by this means also that he learnt to regulate his time and his occupations so exactly, that he had not a single useless moment in the whole day, but labored continually for his own spiritual profit, or that of his neighbor, which he desired no less ardently than his own.

He was never seen in the cells of others,

nor suffered any one to enter his own, unless charity required it. When he was compelled to open his door to speak to those who had business with him, he used as few words as possible in satisfying them, and quickly returned to his beloved retreat. Those who wished to see him, generally sought him in one or other of the five places he had consecrated to the five sacred wounds of our Lord —the altar, the choir, the library, the infirmary, or his cell; for in any other place it was almost useless to seek him.

One of his greatest sorrows was to see a religious idle and useless; and if by chance he saw one without any employment, he would endeavor to remedy the evil by discreet and charitable means; and compared the religious without occupation to a soldier without arms, exposed to the attack of his enemy.

All loved him. All in the monastery honored him for his sweetness and his prudence. He used every means in his power to preserve peace in the community, and if there happened to be the least breach of concord between any of the brothers, he quickly united them again in the bonds of fraternal charity. He revered his superiors as those who held the place of God. The obedience

that he rendered them was prompt and ready, and he never offered reasons to obtain dispensations from their commands, or to delay in the slightest degree their execution.

He was patient beyond measure, and humble and affable to all men. Not that he conversed equally and familiarly with all, but with those only whose spirit and virtue were tried; remembering the counsel of the wise man, that we should bestow our love upon all men, but give our confidence only to a few.

CHAPTER V.

HE TEACHES THEOLOGY AT SALAMANCA.

THE pleasure that he found in these holy and devout exercises so entirely satisfied his mind, that if it had been in his power, he would for ever have renounced all other things to remain as a simple religious, and to end his days in that hidden life which his soul loved. For he judged by the profit which he himself reaped from this sort of life, that it was the least perilous and the best calculated to lead on to that perfection, which

he so ardently longed to attain. But the providence of God had other designs upon him. The grace given him to embrace a religious life, was only given to dispose and prepare him for employments more conducive to the glory of God, and the good of his fellow-men. His superior ordered him to teach theology in the monastery of Salamanca. He obeyed simply, without urging any of those excuses which false humility so often makes use of, in order to be entreated to do what is requested, and thus be exalted in the eyes of men. In his course, he explained the Master of the Sentences, keeping in his lectures the same order that this illustrious doctor observes in his four books, which contain the whole body of theology. He possessed a clear head, and a firm and solid judgment, but his memory was not so happy. He told Father Roderic, a celebrated religious, that he had labored hard to supply this defect, being obliged to explain his lectures to the students of the monastery, and to other scholars of the university, who quitted their own classes to attend his.

And yet, with this new charge, which was enough to occupy entirely an ordinary man, he relaxed in none of his exercises of piety and mercy, visiting and serving the sick

according to his usual custom. He had his regular hours of meditation, and if he was sometimes prevented from assisting in choir, on account of his lectures, he was the more earnest and assiduous when he could do so. Those days on which he did not hear his classes, he was never missing from the office, and was most frequently seen at matins.

Such was the life and conduct of this holy professor. Nothing was left undone on his part, to make his scholars skilful and learned theologians; but as he only regarded the glory of God, and the good of their souls in their advancement, he was much more anxious to see them humble and devout, than excelling in that knowledge which puffs up the mind. He exhorted them by his words, and still more by the example of his virtues and his holy life, to join the fear of God with the study of letters; because, he would say, "Science and doctrine, without piety, are like a sword placed in the hand of a child, who can make no good use of it, and may injure many." At other times he would address those likely to fall into the opposite fault; for he equally blamed the mistake of many, who, under the pretext of piety, failed to apply themselves enough to study. He would say

to them, that sanctity alone may be very advantageous to those who possess it, yet it is of little value as regards the church and our neighbor, unless united with a knowledge of doctrine, of Holy Scripture, and of the Fathers. And that it is an abuse to imagine that the study of letters is incompatible with devotion and interior recollection in a monastery.

That of the Augustinians of Salamanca was soon crowded with a number of excellent religious, raised by our Lord's goodness to a high degree of piety and knowledge; all distinguished servants of God, perfect and apostolic men. Several of them went afterwards to the West Indies, to labor in the conversion of the new world. Among others were the fathers, Christolph of St. Martin, Peter of Pampeluna, John Cruzati, and above all, Father Jerome Ximenes, one of our Saint's most familiar friends. This holy man, who, like his Master, sought only the means of glorifying God and procuring the salvation of souls, having learnt that an infinite number in America were lost for want of instruction and catechizing in our holy faith, entreated St. Thomas, as soon as he became Provincial, which was in the year 1529, that he would send him into those dis-

tant regions, to labor in his Lord's vineyard. St. Thomas, who well understood his character, consented to his earnest entreaties, and gave him as companions in his labors two of those before mentioned, with several others that he thought well fitted for this apostolic ministry.

Among the gifts which this Saint had received, that which St. Paul calls the discernment of spirits, was very conspicuous in him. He had no sooner entered into conversation with a person, than he seemed to discover by an interior light what were his desires, thoughts, and inclinations. It was in this way he knew the zeal, the strength, and purity of intention of those holy laborers whom the Son of God called to the Indies to preach His Gospel. His joy and consolation were extreme in sending them forth on this glorious mission; while at the same time he regretted deeply that his duties as Provincial would only allow him to accompany them in heart, and with his prayers. He embraced them tenderly on their departure, and when they threw themselves at his feet, entreating his blessing, he said: "I give it you, as your father and superior Go, my children, go, my brethren. He who sent His apostles to spread His Gospel throughout

the world, and to announce the glad tidings of salvation, is the same God who now sends you to preach our holy faith to the Gentiles. Fear not to cross the seas, however long and perilous your voyage may be. Go boldly from Christian countries to those of savage and barbarous nations; go courageously and with a confidence of success. For one of these two things is certain; either, by the grace of God, these idolatrous pagans will become faithful Christians, or it will be permitted, for your good, that they shall not believe your words, and will bestow on you the crown of martyrdom."

The event verified his words. At first the difficulties they met with seemed almost insurmountable. But by their incessant labors, and unwearied efforts in preaching, joined to the example of their holy lives, accompanied by the miracles which our blessed Lord enabled them to perform, to confirm the truth of their doctrine, this ungrateful country, which hitherto had produced only the thorns and briars of sin, became fertile and abundant in good works, through the thousands of souls that these first evangelical conquerors of the new world drew from the darkness of error and idolatry into the clear light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Before leaving this subject, to prove that, to St. Thomas of Villanova, under God, ought to be attributed the good effected by the fathers of this order for the glory of God and the propagation of our holy faith, we will here insert a letter of grateful acknowledgment, addressed to him by Father Jerome Ximenes, at a time when he was not Provincial, but only superior of the Augustinians of Burgos. By this we may see that that country was indebted to him for many prayers, fasts, and other good works, performed with the intention of obtaining its conversion, as well as for sending them his religious as missionaries, and procuring the means necessary for their subsistence.

"REVEREND FATHER,

"The peace of God be with you.

"Our Fathers and Brethren, by the grace of God, all arrived safely in this city of Mexico, the sixth of September last, 1539. We are all of one accord in the belief that our Lord Jesus has prepared an ample and rich crown for your Reverence, since he inspired you to do so much for the achievement of the holy work in which we are engaged. In reality we may call it your work; for you have contributed more than any other towards it. We owe you a deep

debt of gratitude, and are, in truth, the children of your much honored Paternity, for whom we feel a sincere and cordial affection. To testify our thanks in a worthy manner towards you, it would be necessary to write them in letters of gold, or rather in our own blood; still we trust that this will be sufficient to express to you the feelings of our hearts. But we doubt not that the Master in whose vineyard we are laboring by your means, has written your name in eternal and ineffaceable characters in the book of life. Certainly, His Divine Goodness clearly shows how agreeable our poor efforts to enlighten this unhappy nation are to Him, by the fruit which is every day produced from the seed of the word, and by the care he takes to send His ministers to discover new countries, and to make new conquests for the publication of His gospel. A year ago, a religious of St. Francis, a Frenchman, set out from these provinces to make discoveries where our governor had not yet been able to penetrate. After having travelled five hundred leagues of inhabited country, he came to a desert of sixty more, which he crossed, and arrived at a very populous kingdom, containing fortified cities, filled with beautiful and sumptuous edifices. The inhabitants were civilized, and

most of them wore double robes of silk, after the fashion of the augurs of the ancient Romans, and resembling Europeans in all other respects. I will be silent as to the riches of this country, because what I should say would appear incredible. He found there an infinite number of temples dedicated to idols. Some of them were covered both within and without with emeralds, and other equally precious stones. Our Spaniards, whose desire of gold has led, and still leads them to encounter the perils of the southern coast, assures us in like manner, that they have discovered a number of large and beautiful islands near the land. I say this to your Reverence, that you may know what service you have rendered to our Lord in sending laborers into his vineyard, and also to induce you to send us many more, that we extend the knowledge of the Lord through the length and breadth of the land. As for those you last sent us, with the young man to whom you wish me to give the habit, they have arrived safely, after having encountered many perils and fatigues. But as we have an abundance of everything necessary for their refreshment, we shall endeavor to reëstablish their health as soon as possible, and send them each one to his station, except the

novice, and brother Diego of Vertaviglio, who remains as master of our young professed at Mexico. All here are by the grace of God in good health, and entreat Him with our whole hearts, that it may please Him to increase in you that charitable spirit which He has so liberally bestowed on you in favor of this holy work, and to preserve you in His grace.

"Your very humble

"Brother, JEROME XIMENES.

"From Hapichetla, Oct. 9, 1539."

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE WONDERFUL TALENT FOR PREACHING THAT GOD BESTOWED ON ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

WE will now resume the thread of the history that we left for a moment, to dwell on the mission of the disciples of this great Saint to the West Indies.

His provincial, being informed of the great talents possessed by St. Thomas, not only for instructing in the schools, but also for preaching in the public pulpits, judged that it was high time a man of such acknowledged

merit and sanctity should appear in the world, to enlighten it with his doctrine, and to inflame it with the love of God by the example of his holy life. For this reason he ordered him to close his instructions, and leave the pulpit of the schools to ascend that of the Church, in order to preach the Gospel, trusting that God, who had given him the requisite qualities for the office, would be glorified by him, and his neighbor edified.

He obeyed the command of his superior without hesitation, firmly believing that in accomplishing his will he accomplished that of God, whom he revered in his person.

The holy evangelist, speaking of the Son of God, takes especial notice of two things respecting His preaching. In the first place, he says that having one day entered into the synagogue at Nazareth, He took the scripture, and in explaining it, applied the passage of Isaias to Himself, saying it was of Him the prophet spoke these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath sent me; He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up." The second thing which he remarks is, the wonderful silence and gravity He always preserved;

He, who is the Word of the Eternal Father, and who makes the tongues of infants eloquent. By the first He teaches us how absolutely necessary it is for the preacher who would worthily acquit himself of his ministry, to live holily, in order to draw down the Spirit of God into his soul, to retain Him there, and, as it were, oblige Him to water with His pure and heavenly dew the seed of the word which he is sowing, that it may be fruitful. And, moreover, that he ought not to engage of himself in this apostolic function, nor consult his own wishes, but should wait till the Spirit of God calls him, and speak to him by the express command of his superior. By the second He teaches us that the office of a preacher is no child's play, but a most serious employment, leaving no room for the follies and giddinesses of youth. He who undertakes it should be especially careful that he does not contradict by his conduct the truths which his lips utter, and thus weaken the authority with which he ought to announce the holy doctrines of the Gospel.

Our holy preacher entered upon his office with these necessary dispositions. He was of mature age, and the order of his superiors, which was the seal of his mission, together

with an abundance of very singular gifts and graces bestowed on him by God, enabled him to acquit himself worthily of his duties.

Though in his manners and conduct he possessed the wisdom of the old, even in his early youth, yet he did not begin to preach till he was thirty-six, and even then not without an express command; so great was his humility. It was an extraordinary thing to see how the rich and the noble flocked from all parts to see and hear him. Bishop Mugnatones, in his Abridgment of his Life, says, that he preached with such power and energy, and so great a demonstration of zeal for the salvation of souls, that his renown was spread throughout Salamanca, every one regarding him with almost the same admiration they would have felt had they seen one of the apostles, or an angel descended from heaven in a human form, to preach the Gospel.

Father John Hurtado, a religious of the order of St. Dominic, one of the most celebrated theologians and greatest preachers then in Spain, finding some difficulty in what the great, the little, the simple, and the learned, all assured him as to the exceeding excellence of St. Thomas as a preacher, determined to judge for himself how far all

that he heard was true. He saw and heard him; and at the end of the sermon, being struck with astonishment and quite overcome, he exclaimed that the doctrine which he preached was not studied in books, but came direct from heaven, and could only have been learned at the feet of Jesus Christ. Then again, considering the apostolic liberty with which he reproved vices, his power of persuading, the fire with which he inflamed all hearts, and that inimitable manner with which he induced men to reform their depraved morals, to fly sin, and to embrace virtue, this great religious could not contain his admiration, crying out, "Forever praised and blessed be our Lord and our God, for having given us in these times a Saint, and so admirable a minister of the Gospel. As to myself, I confess that I had difficulty in believing what I heard of this father, because it seemed to me that those accounts were exaggerated, but I say with truth, that what they then told me was nothing in comparison of what I have myself now seen."

Soon afterwards, he was entreated to preach the Lent sermons in the Cathedral of Salamanca, just at the time when all Spain was in commotion; most of the provinces revolting against the sovereign in the year

1521. He preached with so much success, that the same Don Juan of Mugnatones, Bishop of Segovia, (who speaks as a witness, and as one of the conquests of this holy preacher, who drew him from the vanities of the world, to follow our Lord in the narrow way, by entering the order of St. Augustine,) assures us that he made so many and such remarkable conversions at Salamanca, that those who witnessed the change in this city said, that it seemed rather that Salamanca was turned into a monastery, than that there were monasteries in Salamanca; so great and so universal was the reformation of manners in all sorts of persons. All the religious houses of both sexes had an opportunity of making a rich harvest; every one was burning so much with the fire of devotion with which this apostolic man kindled all hearts, that not only those who made open profession of virtue, but those who were the most attached to the world by sensual pleasures, and by the cares of riches, which our Lord calls thorns which choke the divine seed, came in crowds to hear him.

Of all who listened to him, none could resist the fire of those ardent words which flowed from his inmost heart, to light in that of others the divine fire which burnt and con-

sumed his own breast. The most considerable fruit which God drew from his preaching, and the example of his holy life, consisted principally in the conversion of the greater part of the young people of Salamanca, who, eager to quit the world, pressed into every order, entreating to be admitted; so that not having room to receive all those who presented themselves, the superiors were obliged, after filling their novitiates, to send the rest to the other towns of Castile, whose monasteries were in like manner quickly filled; all of them publishing wherever they went, the wonderful talents with which God had blessed His servant. Even Philip the Second, having heard of the renown of this holy religious, was persuaded that he could not give his son Charles a better master, one more worthy or more capable of instructing him. He afterwards appointed him to the bishopric of Segovia, thus giving the first proof of his sense of our Saint's merits.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE GREAT VIRTUES WITH WHICH THE SAINT ACCOMPANIED HIS PREACHING.

IT is very difficult for those who are constantly engaged in preaching, not, in time, to diminish somewhat of the rigor and severity of their lives; and especially when they have gained a high reputation, and are often sought after by hearers and others; by the one to have their doubts resolved, and by the others to receive counsels for the regulation of their life and conduct. This fatigue, added to the burden which the office of preacher necessarily brings with it, sometimes deprives him of the tranquillity and interior recollection which he enjoyed before he was induced by charity to take on himself this increase of duty.

But although the numbers that flocked to our Saint, anxiously desiring his advice, when added to the labor of preaching, might have sufficiently occupied and indeed oppressed him, yet it did not excuse him to give to prayer and meditation less time than before, or to omit any of his accustomed fasts and abstinences. He appeared equally recol-

lected in himself, and as great a lover of penance as before, afflicting his body by fasts, watchings, and by the privation of whatever could in the least degree flatter his senses.

As he designed the good of others as much as his own, in all that he did, hoping to persuade his auditors of the necessity of penance by example as well as by words, our good God gave so much power to his preaching, that he, by his sermons, generally obtained his end, the salvation of sinners. As all knew assuredly that the Saint urged nothing upon others which he had not first practised himself, he carried away the minds and hearts of his hearers like a torrent, and led them to such feelings as he wished them to possess, to detach them from the love of sin, and to lead them in the end to the love of virtue.

He was once asked by a friend, who was lost in admiration and wonder at the effects of his preaching, what books were, in his opinion, the best, and most adapted for those who exercise the ministry. "Every book approved by the Church," said he, "is good, and always giving the first place to the Holy Scripture, which is preferable to every other book, there is not one from

which the preacher may not derive much profit, provided only that he have these two qualities, holiness and humility." He said also there was a strange error into which certain preachers were apt to fall; they destroy their health in the exercise of preaching, in order to benefit their neighbor, and entirely forget themselves; they think only of reforming the lives of others, while they neglect to correct their own; the very thing with which they ought to begin. He also greatly condemned, not in public, but when in private with his friends, those preachers who depend too much upon their studies, and who, neglecting prayer, employ more time than they ought in amassing thoughts and conceptions from books, to be produced afterwards in the pulpit, imagining that to succeed in this science, it was more necessary to be studious men than men of prayer. To counteract this error, he collected a multitude of passages from Scripture, proving how necessary it is for the evangelical preacher to apply himself seriously to the exercise of humility and of continual and fervent prayer.

What St. Thomas of Villanova recommended so strongly to others, he practised rigidly himself. He had acquired such a

habit of prayer, that, according to those who knew him best, his heart was constantly raised to God, speaking to Him interiorly in the midst of business and the most complicated occupations. It was the same, even after he became archbishop, whether giving audiences or replying to those who came to treat with him on matters of importance. Before he engaged in any affair, he was accustomed to retire into his oratory, and there throwing himself on his knees before a crucifix, to entreat Almighty God that it would please Him to teach him what he ought to say, and how he ought to behave on that occasion, that what was done might redound to His greater glory and the good of his neighbor.

He was not curious or precise in speech. Nor did he pique himself on the beauty or ornament of his language. His discourse was well chosen, clear, and concise. He was always especially careful that the doctrine he preached should be strong, devout, and full of the Spirit of God, that his auditors might receive it, not with praises and admiration, which he despised as dangerous and superfluous, but as a Christian ought to receive it, with a feeling of its coming from God, and with a sincere desire to amend and

to become better for the future. Whence it often happened, after his sermons, that his hearers, bitterly deploring their sins, would throw themselves at the feet of a confessor, scarcely able to speak from the excess of the grief and regret which they felt within them.

His name was known everywhere throughout Castile, especially at Burgos and Valladolid, where at that time Charles the Fifth held his imperial court. That sovereign, together with the empress, were astonished at what they heard of St. Thomas' great talents for preaching; but when they listened to him themselves, they acknowledged he surpassed his reputation. Their majesties wrote immediately to his Provincial, to say that they would retain him for their ordinary preacher, and as such they wished that he might remain at Valladolid, for their particular benefit. They assisted regularly at his sermons during Lent, as also on the Sundays and principal festivals of the year, together with a wonderful concourse of people, of prelates, and of the grandees of Spain. The emperor sometimes came without either guard or retinue, that he might hear him more at his ease, remaining there in that state to the end, as an ordinary person would have done.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT, WITH SOME EXAMPLES.

TO constitute a true preacher of the gospel, it would have seemed sufficient to possess the gifts and graces we have already seen carried to so high a degree of perfection in St. Thomas of Villanova. But the Holy Spirit, who intended to make use of him in an extraordinary way, had endowed him with two other virtues of great value in giving power and efficacy to his mission; that like another Jerome, he might destroy, build up, and edify. To speak correctly, they should rather be called graces and celestial favors than virtues, since all the efforts of the human mind are incapable of acquiring them, or giving them to others. God alone can grant them, of His infinite goodness and mercy, to whom He pleases and when He pleases.

The first of these graces was a certain light or interior view, by means of which, when ascending the pulpit, he knew, or rather the Holy Spirit discovered to him, the defects

and spiritual necessities of his auditors, in order to apply the most appropriate remedy. The bishop of Segovia, in the Abridgment of his Life, mentions this peculiarity as very wonderful, his auditory being composed of such a variety of minds and of situations in life; viz., prelates, bishops, princes, counsellors, courtiers; besides an innumerable concourse of people of all sorts and conditions. Yet all felt enlightened and inflamed by the power and brilliancy of the very same discourse, as if he had uttered it for each one in particular, or as if they had already thrown themselves at his feet, enabling him, by an humble confession of their maladies, to apply the remedy he judged the most proper and salutary. And what is still more wonderful, his words being written and pronounced by the lips of another, had, in some sort, the same effect as when delivered by himself. Don Gasparo d'Avalos, Archbishop of Granada, having to preach on one of the principal festivals of the church, and anxious to produce a great effect on the minds and hearts of his people, entreated our Saint to gratify him with one of his conceptions, proper to that solemnity. He excused himself at first, and endeavored to escape from granting the request; believing from

the mean opinion he held of himself, that his productions were unworthy of notice. But the archbishop would take no denial, and he at length yielded to his wishes.

Now although this prelate had all the parts of a good preacher, and was accustomed completely to satisfy his hearers, yet on this occasion he touched them to such a degree, that on his leaving the pulpit his chapter came to him in a body, expressing their admiration, and exclaiming they had never heard anything like it. "Gentlemen," replied the archbishop, "it is not astonishing you should be so affected, for what I have just said is not mine, but Father Thomas' of Villanova, who communicated it to me, and who at the same time has given me a share of his spirit and zeal."

The other favor bestowed on St. Thomas by our Lord, was a very lively impression on his heart, and a deep feeling of the importance of the subject on which he preached. So that although the divine fire which enkindled his heart was sufficiently known by the inflamed words which issued from his lips, yet the graces and favors which God showered upon him were still more visibly discovered by the ecstasies and transports of spirit, which were very usual with him. He

sometimes remained ravished and deprived for a time of the use of his senses, by the force and vehemence of the interior feeling which consumed his soul, at the consideration of the glorious mysteries of our faith. The ecstasy into which he fell one Holy Thursday in the presence of the emperor, was notorious, and well known by every one in Castile. While preaching, when he came to those words of St. Peter, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet," he entered so completely into their spirit and deep meaning while explaining them, and saying, "What, Lord, my feet! Thou who art my God, the glory of the angels, and all the beauty of heaven!" that he was, as it were, out of himself, absorbed, and ravished, and remained for some time without uttering another word, immovable as marble, and insensible to everything around him. No other sign of life was perceptible than the tears which flowed in abundance from his eyes which were fixed and raised towards heaven.

In the year 1541, he was called to Toledo, to assist at the provincial chapter, by a letter from the Very Rev. Father Seripandus,* at

* Jerome Seripandus, Cardinal Legate at the Council of Trent, was preconized, with two others—Hosius a Pole, and Simonetta of Milan—by Pope Pius IV. in 1552. Pius III. had, previous to this, invited him to assist at the Council during its session at Bologna,

that time general of the order, and afterwards cardinal legate of the pope, and president of

where, according to the testimony of the learned Pallavicini, he was held in the highest esteem by reason of the depth of his learning. In the question of reform he was charged to act with other wise and zealous prelates in preparing and revising the matter on this point, to be afterwards presented to the Council for approbation, and this, that "*the ancient beauty of the Church might be renewed and the mouth of her enemies be closed.*" The result of his labor was the chapters, "*On the Residence of Bishops*," "*The Conferring of Orders*," "*On Benefices*," "*Curacies*," "*Episcopal Visitations*," *Clandestine Marriages*," etc. He with Cardinal Hosius and four others, viz., Eustache Bellay bishop of Paris, two other prelates, and Father Christopher Padovino, superior general of the Hermits of St. Augustine, were commissioned to write the doctrinal expositions that head the canons. He assisted also in chronicling the events of the Council at Trent and Bologna. The MSS. (in one large volume, folio) are, some in the Museo Barberini at Bologna, the others in the library of St. Giovanni at Naples. Seripandus died on the 17th of March, 1563, at Trent, and was buried there in the Augustinian church of St. Mark. He had lived under the Rule of St. Augustine for fifty-six years. His last words to those around him were, "*Why mourn ye as ones having no hope?*" (St. Paul to the Thess., 1 Epist. iv. ch. 12 v.) Seripandus assisted at the first opening of the Council at Trent the 13th of December, 1545, 11th of March, 1547, as general of his order; at the second opening, at Bologna, the 21st of April, 1547, 18th of September, 1549, as Archbishop of Salerno; and at the third, at Trent, from 1561–63, as Cardinal Legate *a latere*. He was born in 1493 at the town of Troja, in Naples, and was of noble descent. He was skilled in the Hebrew, Greek and Chaldee, and in great esteem as a preacher. He wrote many works, viz., a "*Treatise on Justification*," (in Latin), "*Notes* (in Latin) *to the Epist. to the Galatians*," with answers to some questions on the text of the Canonical Epistles, a "*Treatise on Original Sin*," two "*Commentaries* (Latin) *on the Epist. of St. Paul to the Romans and Galatians*," "*Exposition of the Creeds of the Apostles, of St. Athanasius, and the Nicene*," an *Abridgment of the Constitutions of the Order of St. Augustine, with*

the Council of Trent. Father Seripandus intended to make him provincial and his vicar-general in Spain. St. Thomas, however, delayed his journey until, according to custom, and the rules of the order, he knew the provincial would be elected, fearing they would impose the charge on him. The Very Rev. Father was much displeased with him; yet when he arrived he could not refrain from embracing him warmly, so high was the esteem he felt for his character, and so great his joy at seeing him again. Without showing any resentment, he accosted him in this cordial manner, "My son, why have you delayed to come? Certainly your brethren and I have much desired to see you." He then ordered him to ascend the pulpit the next day, which was the feast of St. Michael, and the Sunday of the chapter. He obeyed without hesitation, not alleging in excuse, as he might reasonably have done, the little time for preparation given him. He treated in his sermon of the constant care and providence of God over His church, and over all the faithful, and of the debt of gratitude we all owe

a brief history of the same Order from its rise in Africa up to his time; nineteen "*Sermons on the Lord's Prayer,*" a treatise "*On the Art of Praying,*" a "*Funeral Oration over the Emperor Charles V.,*" a "*Treatise on Justice and Christian Liberty,*" with fifteen vols. of historical, philosophical, Scriptural and theological essays.

to our heavenly Father for whatever good we possess, and for His deputing one of His holy angels to watch over each of us. Having chosen as his text the verse of the 107th Psalm, "Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?" he thus addressed the general: "My Very Rev. Father, this verse that I have taken as the subject of my discourse, teaches us that he who is a citizen of heaven, is a stranger and pilgrim here below." In saying these words our Lord gave him so strong an interior feeling of tenderness, that he fell into an ecstasy, not being able to speak, yet shedding floods of tears in the presence of that illustrious audience, who were surprised and astonished at seeing him preach so divinely with his eyes and by his silence. After having remained some time in this state, by a violent effort to repress this powerful feeling he recovered himself, and returning to his subject, he pursued it with a reasoning so sublime and elevated, that the theologians who were present in great numbers from divers places and of divers orders, all agreed that, humanly speaking, it was utterly impossible he could have learned such eloquence in any other school than in that of the Holy Spirit, who had Himself inspired him with it.

A similar thing happened to him when he was prior at Burgos, and was giving the habit to a novice. All the town collected on this occasion, knowing that the Saint would open the ceremony by an exhortation they were most desirous to hear. The tender age of the novice led him to take as the subject of his discourse these words of the Canticle, "*Soror nostra parvula est et ubera non habet.*" As soon as he began to sound the depths of these words, he fell into an ecstasy as before, and remained a full quarter of an hour without speaking. Then recovering himself, and throwing his eyes around him he said, "Brethren, I ask your pardon. I have a poor and weak heart, and I feel ashamed of being so often overcome on these occasions; but I will endeavor to repair my fault." Upon which he resumed his subject, concluding it with wonderful success. Father John of St. Michael, prior of the Augustinians of Saragossa, who was present, relates that these raptures were very frequent with the Saint, especially in choir assisting at the office, where he was often seen elevated from the ground. The ecstasy into which he fell on one Ascension day was considered the longest and most wonderful. When they began to sing the antiphon, *Videntibus illis*, at the

hour of None, he entered so completely into the words, that it seemed as if his soul had abandoned his body from the morning until five in the evening, in order to accompany in spirit the glorious triumph of our Lord on the Mount of Olives; there appearing not the least sign of life in him all that time. It was also noticed on another occasion that he was divinely transported in spirit upon Mount Tabor when he came to those words, *Domine bonum est nos hic esse;* imagining himself among the apostles and prophets, contemplating the Son of God in His glorious transfiguration. Yet far from being exalted by these favors, bestowed on him by our Lord for the purpose of revealing the deep reverence His servant had for His Holy Word, he endeavored as much as possible to hide them from the eyes of all men.

CHAPTER IX.

OF HIS CONDUCT IN THE RELIGIOUS OFFICES IMPOSED ON HIM.

IN addition to the graces and virtues already mentioned, St. Thomas of Villanova possessed a singular prudence and discretion; and he was endowed with good sense and a solid judgment, accompanied with that dovelike simplicity so highly recommended to His disciples by the Son of God. Every one struck with such extraordinary acquirements, with his holiness, and the admirable nature of his instructions, hastened eagerly to him, to obtain the benefit of his counsels for the regulation of their lives or the quieting of their consciences.

He was admired and respected by all the great men of the court. Don Juan de Tavera, cardinal archbishop of Toledo and constable of Castile, never undertook anything of the slightest difficulty without first consulting him, so great was the opinion he entertained of his wisdom.

At the sacred tribunal of penance he was unequalled, uniting gentleness, firmness, and

prudence together, in an incomparable manner. His thirst for the salvation of souls was insatiable. He was naturally so benign and easily led to compassion, that the moment he found a penitent at his feet confessing his sins, his heart was softened and his words full of tenderness. However great his love of retirement, he was always willing to quit it for the duties of the confessional, to change the sweets of solitude in order to soothe the heart of the mourner in that holy Sacrament. Never did he show any sign of impatience or disgust, however wearisome or hateful the matter of confession might be. On the contrary, he wept and groaned with those who wept and groaned; and while showing them the enormity of their offences, to lead them to repentance and a true sorrow, he at the same time consoled them, and encouraged them to wipe out their sins by tears and a holy and salutary penance.

His boundless charity, which led him to encounter any labor for the good of souls, often drew from the very edge of the precipice to the gate of salvation, those who at the sight of their sins would otherwise have rushed headlong into the gulf of despair.

That conduct which made people of the world revere him as a saint, endeared him

especially to the religious of his province, who soon raised him to the offices of the order, without waiting for the time of profession, as their constitution demanded. They rightly judged that the defect of time was more than sufficiently supplied by his extraordinary merit. For several years he was superior of the principal convents of Castile, among others of Salamanca and Burgos. At the latter of these he loved especially to dwell, not only on account of the quiet and tranquillity of the place, but because of the devotion he bore to the holy crucifix, which by its miraculous sweat renders the church of the Augustinians, where it is honored, one of the most famous in all Spain. The convent at Valladolid was also blessed for some time with his superintendence, the emperor, who resided there, being desirous of his presence for his own spiritual benefit.

Though called by holy obedience to command, he behaved towards all as if he were their inferior. No change was perceptible in him, except that he was noticed to be more zealous and fervent than ever in all the exercises of religion. He considered that as in authority he was raised above others, he was bound to set them a good example by sur-

passing them in the practice of every virtue. He meditated continually on the admirable advice given by St. Augustine, in his rules, to the superiors of his order, where he tells them that they ought to impress deeply on their minds, that the only happiness of commanding consists in the power it bestows of serving others. That it is certainly necessary that inferiors honor and respect their superiors; but that the duty of superiors consists in humbling themselves, from the fear of God, even at the feet of those they command; in setting them an example in every good work; in correcting haughty spirits; in encouraging the pusillanimous; in bearing with all; in being ready to take the penances of the weak, and to be cautious and tender in imposing them on any. He further adds, that although both may be necessary, it is far better to gain inferiors by love than by fear; and that it should never be forgotten that Almighty God will call superiors to give a strict account of all those He has committed to their care.

St. Thomas acquitted himself well of his charge. He saw the importance and excellence of this advice of St. Augustine's, and practised it to the very letter. He was the first to engage in the most abject and menial

offices of the house, and others, admiring his conduct, soon imitated him. His exemplary humility superseded the necessity of commanding. All obeyed his very wishes with a ready cheerfulness, seeing one whose holiness was revered not only throughout Spain, but the whole world, treating them with the affability and affectionate familiarity of an equal. Yet he well knew the art of uniting gravity with humility in such a manner, that every one paid him the respect due to his situation; his familiarity never lessening the dignity of his office.

He labored incessantly to lead his religious on to perfection. He ardently desired that they should be pious and modest in their deportment, devout at the altar and the divine office, and at all times filled with a spirit of interior recollection, without which he considered all exterior show of religion as utterly useless. He mourned as deeply for the sins of those under his authority as if he had committed them himself; fasting and disciplining himself, even to blood, for faults in which he had no other share than what his charity induced him to take on himself. He was not of the number of those whom the Evangelist reproves as loading the shoulders of others with heavy burdens

whilst refusing to help them with one of their fingers; on the contrary, he would never accept of any dispensation from the strict observance of the rule himself, and yet to others he was lenient and gentle, releasing them from the performance of certain things, when he could do so without prejudice to the laws of God.

As he loved peace and tranquillity, he was the declared enemy of all kinds of novelties, because he considered them as almost invariably the fruitful seed of troubles and dissensions. For this reason he changed nothing in his monastery, but strictly adhered to the laws of his ancestors. He was a great lover also of justice and equity, which caused him to be very exact in the infliction of those punishments deserved by any of his religious. At the time when the offence was committed, he said nothing to them, but waited a fitting opportunity to reprove them, using gentleness or severity, as he thought most advisable, but always with profit to the offender, who, being no longer under the influence of the passion which caused his fault, received the correction of his superior with gratitude and humility, and as a mark of his prudence and love.

Sometimes even a single glance of his eye

was sufficient to cure their spiritual maladies. At other times, though he knew by the light of the Spirit of God all their tempers and inclinations, he would conceal his knowledge, and appear not to notice the faults of some of his religious, hoping that without his speaking to them, God would open their eyes, and provide the remedy. Of several instances which might be given in proof of this, one will be sufficient. When prior at Burgos, he knew that one of his religious, Father John Rinçon, had fallen into a very considerable fault, and richly deserved punishment; yet he permitted him to escape, saying nothing to him of what had passed. But God, to whom he recommended him in his prayers, accompanied with fasts and disciplines, touched his heart with so lively a sense of the greatness of his fault, that he made a sincere confession, and was ever afterwards regarded by his brethren as a perfect model of a religious. Now as this Father John knew that our Saint could not be ignorant of his fall, he was astonished that he treated him with his usual kindness, and even gave him the preference to his brethren in choosing him as his companion when he went to take possession of the archbishopric of Valentia. Quite overcome

with this distinction, the father asked him why, with the knowledge which he knew he must possess of his misery, he had honored him by this choice. "My son," replied he, "it is true that I know your fault, but I also know you have done penance for it. Love God, and serve Him faithfully."

His patience in bearing with the infirmities of all, made his government mild and amiable. He measured each, not according to his strength, but his charity. He condescended to the weak, aroused the indolent, and encouraged the cowardly; giving counsel to the simple, and making himself all things to all men. Though his care of the sick had always been great, he increased it tenfold when he became superior. All the time he could spare was given to them; serving, assisting, and consoling them. Whatever were his occupations, he never passed a day without visiting the infirmary two or three times, and always contrived to meet the physician there. He fed them with his own hand, and rendered them every other assistance with as much love and tenderness as if each had been a beloved brother. He also provided for the whole community with the same care and charity, anticipating all their wants in so thoughtful a manner that his

religious were never deprived of anything which their rule allowed.

CHAPTER X.

ST. THOMAS IS ELECTED PROVINCIAL TWICE CONSECUTIVELY IN TWO DIFFERENT PROVINCES.

AS he naturally loved solitude, and had no greater joy than that which he experienced when praying in his cell at the foot of his crucifix, or in studying the Holy Scriptures, the charges imposed on him in the order were a heavy burden to him. Nevertheless, having through obedience once accepted them, he made a virtue of necessity, to use a common expression, and offered, as a sacrifice to his Lord, the distaste and repugnance he felt in commanding; and, without showing his dislike, he performed his duties with all the prudence and charity which has been already described.

On surrendering the office of prior, he was twice elected provincial in the two provinces into which Castile had been divided by an apostolic brief of Clement VII., to facilitate the visiting of convents by diminishing the

extent of the province. Both demanded him with many entreaties; but as it was the province of Andalusia in favor of which this division had been made, it was preferred to that of Castile, which did not obtain him as provincial till the next triennial election. He made use of every means his ingenious humility could suggest, to be exempt from this charge. He endeavored in both cases to persuade the fathers not to elect him, alleging at first his incapacity for such an office; and seeing this reason was not accepted, he had recourse to another, which he had not yet employed. He represented to them that it was for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, that he should apply himself rather to preaching than to the office of provincial, which demanded a man's whole time and energies, and which would be far better filled by many of the fathers more worthy and more fitted for it than himself. He depended upon this argument, and thought the fathers would have regard to the glory of God, which seemed concerned in it, and would press him no further. But it happened otherwise. They answered him, that not to submit to an election which had been made with all the proper forms, and not to accept a charge in which he could render

such good service to God and the province, was evidently to resist His holy will; that, certainly, according to the constitutions of the order, no religious could be forced to accept an office, having the care of souls, against his will; but still, they could not see how he could free himself from the sin of disobedience, if he refused the whole body of the province, which had elected him so canonically, and which persisted so steadily in its demand. Being at length conquered by these and similar reasons, he acquiesced, and yielded to their wishes.

On his election, he began at once to consider that as his power and authority increased, so ought his virtue also. "For," said he, "as I am greater and more elevated in station, I ought to be more humble, holy, merciful, devout, and given to prayer, since I have more need than ever of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, that it may please him to enlighten me in the discharge of an office on which depends the good or evil, both spiritual and temporal, of the whole province." He immediately set about making his visits, and overlooked all the convents with an indefatigable zeal. He encouraged the good religious, and excited them to go onwards in the road to perfection; the

negligent and the idle he reproved; he instructed the ignorant, and exhorted each one of the order to labor for his salvation, in serving God faithfully, according to the spirit of his vocation.

Amongst others, there were four things which he particularly recommended in his visits. The first was, that they should all be devout and exemplary in their conduct during the divine office and the celebration of holy mass; and that the churches and the altars should be kept clean and properly dressed, "inasmuch," said he, "as they are the portals through which all blessings come to us, both from God and man." In the second place, he urged strongly the necessity of frequent spiritual reading and meditation, comparing it to the natural heat of the stomach, which digests, strengthens, and preserves the different parts of the body in health. "In like manner," said he, "spiritual reading recollects and strengthens the mind of the religious, making him bring devotion to the altar and attention to the choir; giving him the spirit of ready obedience, endurance in labors, strength against the snares and temptations of the devil, and, in short, arranging and disposing all the feelings of the heart so skilfully, that everything succeeds happily

with those who practise it in the spirit it demands. The third thing which he enforced as most important and necessary in the religious life, was peace; representing to them the advantages and blessings which that daughter of heaven brings on earth to men of good-will; and if by chance he found some restless unquiet spirit in the convent troubling the brethren, he punished him severely as a disturber of the public repose. In the fourth place, he earnestly solicited his religious to use well every moment of their time, to occupy themselves in whatever holy and useful employment best suited their inclinations, and to fly idleness as the pest and entire ruin of all virtue.

He so mortally hated the waste of time in monasteries, that though he issued as few commands as possible to the superiors, lest he might burden their consciences, yet to remedy the fault of idleness, he made use of his authority in enjoining them, in virtue of holy obedience, to reprove for the first time with mildness those religious who were seen idling here and there about the house, but if the fault was repeated, to correct them in full chapter. For a third offence, he adjudged the punishment of the discipline, and if after this the fault continued, he

ordered that the punishment should be augmented until amendment ensued.

To lead his religious to a love of regular observance, he used towards them the same affability and condescension that he employed in gaining strangers and penitents to a love of God. His horror of sin was so great, that he would willingly have laid down his life to prevent the commission of only a single one. And when some unhappy sinner presented himself before him, he received him with love and tenderness, after the example of the good Shepherd, who carries His wandering lamb on His shoulders, rejoicing in bringing it back to the flock. It is impossible to say how many souls he gained to God by means which his prudence and charity invented to win their hearts.

In his public admonitions he endeavored to edify all, without giving offence to any one. At the chapter which opened his visit, he always began his discourse by giving general instructions on whatever subject he thought most necessary; but in the latter part, when it was absolutely necessary to go into particulars, his reproofs and corrections were made with so much discretion and suavity, that they pierced the heart without arousing the pride of any, because,

though his words were grave and severe, they were entirely free from the least shadow of bitterness or contempt.

His zeal for the spiritual improvement of his religious did not make him forget their temporal interests, on which he bestowed all the care his office required. Our Lord had indeed given him the true monastic spirit and love of the community. It was well known that he retained none of the valuable presents which the emperor made him, and which excited the envy of the grandees of Spain. Whatever was given him was thrown into the common mass, and nothing reserved for his own use. His cell, his bed, his clothing, even his books, which were few, and merely those which were necessary, indeed everything which he possessed, breathed the spirit of poverty and religious simplicity; he conformed himself in the use of ordinary necessaries to the lowest brother in the order.

Of the numerous things which were offered him he only accepted those which could be applied to the service of the monastery, and to the common profit, not to his own use. Leaving Valladolid for Burgos, where he had been elected superior, certain presents were offered him by persons of distinc-

tion, which he gratefully accepted, because given him to use as he thought best; but he refused the offer of a casket containing three hundred crowns of gold, because it was to be applied to his own use and the expenses of his journey. He humbly thanked the giver, but returned the casket unopened, saying that he had no need of it. When pressed by this friend, who complained that he had accepted gifts from others, he replied, "Yes, sir, I have taken alms from some of my friends, but they were given not for myself, but for the convent of Burgos, where I am going. If your gift had not been assigned for my especial benefit, I should without doubt have accepted it, otherwise I should have injured the house of Burgos, which greatly stands in need of assistance."

CHAPTER XI.

ST. THOMAS IS ALLIED IN FRIENDSHIP WITH THOSE ONLY WHOM HE KNOWS TO BE VIRTUOUS AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF GOD.

"LIKE loves like," is an axiom, the truth of which is universally recognized, not only in the ordinary productions of nature, but also in those of grace and the farthest removed from matter. We see every day that the saint and the just man withdraw as much as possible from the company of the wicked, to associate with those who are professedly virtuous, and who by the secret emotions of the same zeal, endeavor, like themselves, to bring honor and glory to their common Master, remembering the answer made by our Lord to him who interrupted his sermon by informing Him that His mother and His brethren were without, seeking Him: "Who is My mother and who are My brethren? And stretching forth His hand to His disciples, He said, Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother." Our Saint, who had impressed

deeply on his heart the precepts of this Divine Legislator, following his example, regarded no one with the eyes of flesh and blood, but only with those of charity, which have God for their object. He never attached himself by friendship to those whose virtues were not well known, and who, by a kindred feeling of piety and devotion, sought with him to advance the glory of God, and the good of souls. His inclination for retirement left him very little time for conversation with his religious, and still less with seculars, unless their spiritual good, which he endeavored to procure at all times and in all places, drew him from his beloved solitude. So that whenever he was seen to associate familiarly with any one, it was immediately decided that he could be no ordinary person, but one in whom God had placed great gifts, to be employed conjointly with the Saints in His service.

Among his most intimate friends was Father Diego of Vertaviglio, twice provincial of the Indies, where he built three monasteries of the order at Ucarco, Talaicapan, and Tototepec, after having converted an infinite number of pagans to the faith. Also the Fathers Salazar, Jerome Melendes, Balthazar Malgaregio, Alphonsus Alvarado, and John

Baptist of Moya, all great and celebrated religious, whom the Spirit of God had filled with an ardent and truly apostolic zeal to be the first to plant the standard of the cross, and announce the gospel to Peru and the Moluccas; our Lord enabling them to work there several miracles to establish their authority and their doctrine in the eyes of the barbarians.

It was with such persons that St. Thomas formed his habits and contracted his friendships, drawn to them by their virtues and holiness of life. He considered not the advantages of nobility, knowledge, or any of those qualities which men of the world idolize. He frequently repeated these words of the Saviour, "He is My brother and My friend, who does the will of My Father." And in fact, he had much more pleasure in discoursing with a simple brother whom he knew to be pious and faithful to his vocation, than with the learned, who had less of humility and devotion. It was the same with seculars; however rich and powerful they might be, if they were not wise, devout, and retired, he was never familiar with them, nor admitted them to his friendship, as he did the poor virtuous man, though he might be despised and disregarded by every one.

The instance which he himself relates in his first sermon on the Blessed Sacrament, will suffice to show how much he loved, and in what manner he cultivated piety, wherever he met with it.

A young man who had been brought from Judaism to the true faith by a miraculous and extraordinary effect of the goodness of God, found that although he had been washed from the guilt of original sin in the salutary waters of baptism, yet there existed in the minds of the Catholics around him so strong a feeling of horror against his extraction and his former belief, that they all shunned his approach and avoided having any intercourse with him. St. Thomas hearing this, admitted him to his friendship, often heard his confessions, and treated him with the kindest familiarity, seeing in him that pure and lively faith which made him agreeable in the sight of the Divine Majesty, and totally disregarding the false notions of men. Soon afterwards this new Christian fell ill, and as it was uncertain whether he could recover or not, he sent for our Saint, not only to receive from him the consolations which his state required, but also to make a recital of something which our Lord had deigned in his infinite goodness to make

known to him, and which he thought ought not to be buried with him in the tomb. Until this time he had preserved a strict secrecy on the subject, having learnt that God wishes not that his servants should publish the extraordinary favors and graces bestowed on them. "Father," said he, "I have troubled you to come here, both to aid me to die well, and to fortify me by your holy counsels in that last passage, and also to open my heart to you on a subject which I have hitherto kept secret. You should know then, Father, that as I was once going with another young Hebrew to a place where my father had sent me on some business, we discoursed together of the Messiah, saying to each other, what a great happiness it would be if He should come in our days, and we should see Him with our own eyes. Speaking in this way as still covered with the thick veil which blinds the eyes of the Jews, the heavens appeared to us to open, and to disclose so bright a light, that the darkness of the night vanished in a moment. On relating this to my father, he told me that whenever the heavens open in this manner, it is a sign that God intends to bestow some favor on men, and that it ought to be demanded with submission to the will of God, but also with a firm hope of

obtaining it. My companion and I followed this counsel, and redoubled our prayers and entreaties that it would please the King of Heaven to send us the Messiah, for whom we so ardently longed. In the midst of our prayers, at their greatest fervor, behold, we we both saw at the same moment, in a globe of light, a resplendent chalice and a host above, like that which the Christian priest elevates in saying mass. At first the vision frightened us, but we were soon consoled by means of the heavenly light which shone in our hearts, and made us feel and know that there was no other Messiah than He whom the Christians adore, and that the truths which they believe and teach are those alone which ought to be received in all humility and confidence. We returned a thousand thanks to our good Lord for His merciful condescension to us poor miserable sinners. I took care to say nothing to my father of what happened, still less did I disclose to him the design I had formed of embracing Christianity, from fear of the ill-treatment I should experience at his hands. But on the first occasion which presented itself, I failed not to receive holy baptism, and I have ever since lived in the observance of the evangelical law of my Lord Jesus Christ."

The devout reader will be able to judge by so happy a beginning, to what a height of perfection this new plant of the Church by degrees attained, and whether our Saint was not right in cherishing him so carefully, notwithstanding the unjust aversion that others entertained towards him on account of his birth. Our Saint was certainly gifted with the power of discovering the holiness of others; he sometimes even saw our Lord pouring His light into his soul, in order to penetrate the souls of others, to judge of their future conduct, and what would injure or advance their salvation.

As he made his visit to the convent of Seville where the novitiate was, learning from the Father Master that one of the novices had been tempted, by the instigation of his relations, to leave the order of St. Augustine for another, he addressed him in this manner: "Go, my son, recommend yourself to God, and join your prayers with mine, that it will please Him to make known to me what he expects from you, and whether it is for your good to make this change which your relations desire." At the end of three days he summoned him into his presence and said to him, "My son, I tell you absolutely, that it is not the will of God that you

should quit this habit for another. Your first vocation is without doubt the best, and if under pretence of finding something better elsewhere, you follow the promptings of flesh and blood in preference to the advice I here give you, and leave this monastery for that which you mention, and where you are only called by the consideration that one of your relations is a religious there, I declare to you, on the part of God, that you will never have the happiness of serving Him either there or anywhere else." The novice believed him, shut his ears to the persuasions of his relations, vanquished the demon who made use of them to seduce him, made his profession happily, and became one of the most celebrated religious of his time, conformably to what the Saint had predicted, who sent him some time afterwards to pursue his studies at Salamanca.

CHAPTER XII.

ST. THOMAS REFUSES THE ARCHBISHOPRIC OF GRANADA AND ACCEPTS THAT OF VALENTIA.

WHILE St. Thomas was occupied in visiting the convents of his province, and with an ardent zeal endeavoring to promote the spiritual welfare of the religious under his care, our Lord, who destined him for an employment more conducive to His glory and more useful to His Church, in order to exercise his humility, led the emperor, without any solicitation whatever, to name him to the archbishopric of Granada, then vacant. This sovereign well knew his merits, and that it would be pleasing to God and a signal benefit to this diocese, to give them so holy and learned a man as prelate. He, therefore, summoned him into his presence, to inform him of his choice; but the Saint, with the greatest possible modesty, entreated his majesty to revoke it in favor of another. And though all his friends joined their entreaties, he could never be persuaded to accept it. As the emperor knew that St. Thomas was himself provincial, and had no

superior in Spain who could command him under pain of censure to accept the dignity, and as the affairs of Granada were in a state to brook no delay, so that he could not wait for the orders of the general, who was at Rome, he pressed him no further, and appointed another to fill that high station.

The Saints are so humbled by the knowledge they have of themselves, and the clear view they possess of their own weakness and misery, that they consider themselves unworthy of the employments and honors offered them. Moses is chosen and called by God himself to be the chief of His people. He knows that He who speaks is all powerful, and can provide the means necessary for the accomplishment of His will. He sees him work miracles to encourage him to undertake the journey to Egypt for the delivery of his nation; and yet he cannot resolve to go. He entreats God to dispense with his services, and to send another more capable than himself. St. Thomas, like the prophet, was afraid to undertake so weighty a charge, which his humility represented as too much for his weakness to sustain; and when the emperor yielded, his joy was extreme at his escape, and he continued to discharge his duties as prior till the year 1544, when

the emperor named him for the archbishopric of Valentia, which his uncle, Don George of Austria, quitted for Liege, to which diocese he was called by an express brief of Paul the Third.

It is true that the emperor, who was then in Flanders, did not at first nominate our Saint; at least he had no intention at the beginning of naming him, but a religious of St. Jerome, because he knew his distaste for the episcopate by his refusal of that of Granada. But our Lord overruled the designs of the emperor in the following manner, to show that the election was the work of God, not of man. When he was about to sign the commission for the appointment of the bishop, he sharply reproved the secretary for not having followed his orders, and for having written the name of Father Thomas of Villanova, instead of the religious he had mentioned. The secretary assured him that he heard the name of Father Thomas, and no other, and that he had expressly commanded him to write the commission in his favor, but that if his majesty pleased, the fault could soon be repaired by writing another. The emperor pondered on what his secretary had done, and burst forth in praises to God, who by his secretary had made known to

him His holy will. He immediately signed the commission, which he sent by a courier express to Valladolid, where Philip the Second, his son and successor, who then governed Spain, held his court. The joy was excessive throughout the city when the promotion of the holy religious to the episcopate was made known. Every one considered this dignity as a recompense to which by his merits he was justly entitled. But the prince especially, who loved and respected him as a great servant of God, was much gratified, and immediately sent a messenger to the monastery with his father's letter. As they were saying Compline when he arrived, the Saint, who was assisting, desired he should wait till the office was finished; then going to him in the cloister he received the commission from his hand, and in a grave and serious manner humbly thanked his majesty for the honor done him, at the same time saying he would not fail to wait on the prince the next day, to offer him his thanks in person, and to inform him of what he should resolve to do in this conjuncture. An author who has written his Life, says, that having assembled his religious, he reprimanded the brother porter, and gave him a severe penance for the irreverence he had committed

in entering the choir when he came to tell him one waited to see him, and that by his elevated voice, and the joy which appeared in his countenance, he had made known to the brethren the object of the messenger.

The next day he went to the palace, and having expressed his gratitude to his imperial Majesty, and to his highness, for the honor conferred on him, he added, that being fully aware of his own insufficiency, he most humbly entreated the prince not to command him to accept a charge that he was unfitted for, and said that he had made a resolution never to become a bishop, having enough to do as a simple religious, in laboring for the salvation of his soul, without taking the responsibility of a multitude of others. The prince replied, that he should think well of what he was doing, and consider the profit the diocese of Valentia would receive from his piety and instruction. Still resolved not to accept it, he returned to the prince two or three times, reiterating his entreaties not to be exposed to so manifest a danger, and saying that after having recommended the affair to God, he was still in the same resolution, never to accept a bishopric. At last, throwing himself at his feet, he returned the commission to the prince, humbly entreating his

pardon for so using him, since he could do no otherwise. When he returned to the monastery, he found there Don Peter of Pelasco, constable of Castile, Don Francis de Los Colos, commander of Leon, and several other lords who were much attached to him, and who had come to persuade him to take the care of the diocese of Valentia. They placed before him in strong terms the opportunities it would afford him of advancing the glory of God and the salvation of souls; and urged the pleasure it would give the prince and his imperial Majesty, and the displeasure they would feel if he persisted in his refusal. Don Juan de Tavera, Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, also went to him, and taking him aside into his cell, told him that a religious ought not to be so firm or so attached to his own opinions, but that, giving up his own feelings to those of his friends, he ought to believe, knowing their affection for him, and their judgment and experience, that they were the best judges of what was good for him. To resist the will of his prince on this occasion was to resist the will of God, because he well knew that he was not elected by the voice of man, but by a special and visible order of Divine Providence.

Notwithstanding all that could be said, he

still remained firm in his resolution. At length, throwing himself at the feet of the cardinal, the tears streaming from his eyes, he besought him to urge him no further, but, on the contrary, if he loved him, to do him the favor to inform the emperor that he declined the archbishopric of Valentia, and to give him his reasons for so doing, that his Majesty might not be offended at his conduct. The cardinal, seeing him inflexible, and despairing of making him yield, left him and returned to the prince to inform him of what had passed. He assured him that there was but one way for his highness to obtain his wish, which was to write to the provincial, and get him to use his authority in commanding the Saint to accept the charge under pain of censure.

The letter of the prince was followed by several others on the same subject to Father Francis of Nieve, at that time provincial; who, moved by zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, and considering the quality and the reasons of the persons who wrote to him, and being also well acquainted with the extraordinary merits of F. Thomas, whose religious and disciple he had been, he wrote to him the following letter:

"REV. FATHER:

"I have received a letter from his Highness, in which he informs me that his Majesty has appointed your Reverence to the archbishopric of Valentia, and that you have refused the same. I hereby command you, within twenty-four hours after the receipt of this letter, to accept the archbishopric of Valentia. And to give you merit in so doing, I command it in virtue of holy obedience, and under pain of excommunication, *Trina canonica monitione præmissa.* I issue this command, because I know well that God will be served and honored by you, and his imperial Majesty satisfied.

"I pray our Lord ever to have you in His holy keeping, for the well being of His church.

"At Toledo. This 2d of August, 1544.

"From the Very Rev. Father Francis of Nieve, PROVINCIAL."

He humbly bowed his neck to the yoke of obedience, and had nothing to reply to this fresh command; considering the voice of his superior in that letter as the voice of God himself.

Soon after this, he wrote to the Very Rev. Father General, as well to inform him of his

promotion, as to show him that the charge which he had undertaken would not allow of his executing the commission which the general chapter held at Rome the preceding year had given him, to correct the Constitutions of the Order, together with two fathers of Italy, and one of France, called Father Peter Guerente. I will here give his letter, to show the reader through what door this Saint entered into the dignity of the prelacy.

"To the Very Rev. Father Jerome Seripandus, Prior-General of the Order of St. Augustine, my Father.

"Very Rev. Father, grace and peace to you in the Lord, &c.

"I have not written sooner to your Very Rev. Paternity, because we have no safe road to you since the passages of Rome are occupied. But this is an occasion which obliges me to send a courier express, to inform you that the emperor has named me to the archbishopric of Valentia, without the solicitation of any one; indeed I had not the least idea of it myself. This induces many to believe that my election was the work of God, not that of man. Although I consider it more useful and advantageous to myself to continue in the monastery where I had made my

profession, and peacefully to enjoy the sweets I found there; nevertheless the father provincial commanded, under the pain of censure, that on the receipt of his letter I should consent to my election, comformably to the intention of his Majesty; so that I could do no otherwise than receive it, being forced by the absolute command of my superior. I write these things to you, Very Rev. Father, knowing you love me and consider me as your son, and I beseech you to give me your benediction, and to approve and ratify what has been done in this matter, since I have had no other desire than not to resist authority, or the designs that our Lord has for me, hoping that of His great goodness He will give me strength and power necessary to the discharge of so important an office, when my only object is to labor for His glory and His service. I must, moreover, inform you, that as soon as his Holiness shall have sent me his confirmation, it will be impossible for me to accomplish what your Very Rev. Paternity, conjointly with our general chapter, has ordered concerning the reformation of our Constitutions. Nevertheless, whenever any occasion presents itself wherein I can be of any service to you, Rev. Father, or the interest of the order, I shall always be ready to

embrace it with joy, as a very obedient son.

"I pray our Lord to preserve and comfort you, Rev. Father, for His glory and the good of our holy religion.

"Valladolid, August 12th, 1544.

"From, Rev. Father, your very obedient son,

"Brother Thomas of Villanova."

This would seem to be the place to mention several excellent letters sent him by persons of distinction, to congratulate him, and to show their joy at seeing him by his merits raised to the episcopate. And principally that of Pope Paul III. deserves notice, who seems, in the Bull of his elevation, so much struck with what he had heard of his piety and doctrine, as to be ready to canonize him while living. So also, Philip II. writes of him to the Duke of Calabria, Viceroy of Valentia, in the highest terms of praise, not to mention several others that I will pass over to avoid prolixity.

In the same proportion as his election was a matter of joy and congratulation to others, so was it to himself the cause of the greatest pain and sadness, when he considered with what a heavy cross he was loaded, in taking so many souls under his care, and so render-

ing himself responsible for the Blood that the Son of God had shed for their salvation. This induced him, after he had received the Bull, to decline any more visits of congratulation, being unable to restrain the tears which flowed from his eyes whenever he thought of the loss of the repose and security of the cloister, and the dangers he was about to encounter in an office so painful and perilous as that of a bishop.

He has left us a view of the state of his mind and feelings in a letter which he wrote to the same sovereign pontiff, Paul III., with which I will conclude the first part of this history.

"Beatiss. Pater.

"VERY HOLY FATHER,

"It is not without fear and dismay that I have received the letters by which your Holiness constitutes me Archbishop of Valentia. For where is the man who, regarding with the eye of faith the weight of this high ministry, would not tremble and be cast down at the sight of so holy and responsible a dignity! May the very good and merciful Jesus Christ our Lord, help me to serve His Church, for which he descended from heaven, to found and cement it with the blood that He and His saints have shed!

As it is not in my power worthily to express the gratitude which I feel for the kindness with which it has pleased your Holiness to honor me, I will at least show it in part by my conduct, acquitting myself faithfully of the office imposed on me. For I believe your Holiness is never so well pleased as when you see those whom you have called to share in your solicitudes, zealous in assisting you to govern that flock that God has committed to your care, to rule, govern, and increase it. This is assuredly my intention and resolution. May God grant that I may be able to execute it as I desire. As to the rest, I have nothing which is not yours, and which you have not acquired by the benignity your Holiness has shown me. I assure you there is no one in the world more ready than myself to render you submission and obedience in whatever it shall please you to command me. I have taken the oath of fidelity before consecration, according to custom, and I have sent it you, as you commanded in your letter.

"May God keep and preserve your Holiness many years for the good and peace of His Church.

"From your Holiness'

"Humble and devoted creature,

"FATHER THOMAS of Villanova."

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CONDUCT OF ST. THOMAS WHEN HE BECAME ARCHBISHOP, AND OF THE FIRST PROOFS WHICH HE GAVE OF CHARITY AND PRUDENCE IN HIS GOVERNMENT.

AS soon as the holy archbishop received his Bulls, he endeavored to hasten the ceremony of his consecration as much as possible, feeling that he had now no right to employ his time in any way but in discharging the obligations he had contracted towards the flock committed to his care. The cardinal archbishop of Toledo, with two other prelates, imposed hands on him in the church of the Augustinians at Valladolid; after which he prepared to leave the town immediately, to avoid the honors which he apprehended would be offered him on his departure. He spoke on the subject to no one until the morning of his departure, when, having assembled his religious, he took leave of them, after having embraced them all, and having recommended himself to their prayers. He permitted no one to accompany him but

Father Francis Rinçon and a servant who followed him, all three leaving on foot quietly and without any ceremony. His mother, who passionately desired to see him, had entreated him by letter to pass through Villanova, which is almost the direct road from Valladolid to Valentia. Yet when he arrived at the place where it was necessary to determine whether he would go or not, he stopped, and as if in doubt what he ought to do, consulted his companion, who showed him that he ought not to refuse this duty to his mother, nor deprive her of the happiness of his company. "Let us pray to God," said the Saint, and falling on his knees, as he was accustomed to do before undertaking anything, he said after a while to his companion, "Come, let us go straight to Valentia; some other opportunity will offer for me to see my mother. *Relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem suam et adhærebit uxori suæ.*" Then he arose and went on his way to Valentia, where he arrived in this poor manner.

The respect he felt for his order induced him to retire to our Lady of Succor, which is a monastery of the Augustinians, without the walls of Valentia, instead of entering the city and going at once to the archbishop's palace, where he was expected.

The superior received him at the gate, threw himself at his feet, and paid him all the honor he thought due to a great prelate and to one of the most holy and learned men of his order. The *Te Deum* was solemnly chanted at his entry, but he would suffer no other ceremonies, nor the least extraordinary thing to be done on his account. He remained on his knees for some time before the Blessed Sacrament, and then went into the chapel of our Lady of Succor, to whom he had always had a very particular devotion. What very much increased the joy that all felt at their holy pastor's arrival, and confirmed the general opinion that had been formed of his holiness, was a signal favor that God conferred on his diocese, even throughout the kingdom of Valentia. No rain had fallen for a long time; the earth had become so dry and arid that the poor laborers could not cultivate it. The province seemed on the eve of a horrible famine, when, upon the prayers of the Saint, the heavens suddenly opened, and poured down an abundant rain, which lasted several days, abundantly watered the fields, enabling the laborers to cultivate the earth, and rejoicing the whole country, which was in dread of the famine. Every one felt it was to the Saint

they were indebted for the visible grace they had received; and all looked upon it as an earnest of the invisible and spiritual grace that God designed for them by means of his charity and doctrine.

He passed the festivals of Christmas with much recollection and devotion in the company of his brethren, said mass every day, and assisted at the Divine Office and at the Refectory, as if he had been a simple religious. The superior had much trouble in making him yield so far as to take the first seat, and give his benediction at the end.

He resolved to make his entry the first day of the year 1545, not having been able to do it sooner on account of the heavy rains. The magistrates, accompanied by all the nobility of Valentia, conducted him from the monastery to the town-house, where the Saint adored the wood of the true Cross that had been brought there for the purpose. Following the clergy entoning the *Te Deum*, he was led in procession to the cathedral in the midst of a concourse of people, and then began his functions by the episcopal benediction that he gave with the usual indulgences on such occasions. After which he returned to his palace, accompanied by his canons and persons of all ranks, who loudly praised God for

having given them a Saint to govern and lead them. Whilst he, on his part, to be enabled to perform his duty and satisfy their expectations, implored from on high the assistance which he should require in his responsible situation.

The next morning he celebrated mass with this intention, shedding many tears. The first proof that he gave of the mildness and benignity of his government, was seen in his leaving the altar to go immediately to visit the official prisons, to see the priests who were there, and in what manner they were treated. He was horrified with certain dark and damp cells that he perceived, and having found on inquiry that ecclesiastics were sometimes there, and that they were made for that very purpose, "If God pleases," said he, "not a single one shall ever enter there by my orders. These places seem to me more fitted for robbers and assassins than for the Lord's anointed. We will find, God helping us, other means to punish and gain our brethren." He caused them to be filled with earth, and the doors fastened up, to render them entirely useless.

Soon after this, Don Gregory Carros, Michael Vigue, and Don Honorio Pelizer, canons of the cathedral, came and offered

him four thousand crowns on the part of their body, to testify their joy at his presence, and to give him the means of furnishing his house, as they knew it was empty, even of the most necessary things. He received the present, and thanked them for it most affectionately, but instead of using it, he sent it to the administrators of the great hospital, that it might be used for the poor, to repair the damages the fire had a short time before done to the building. To prevent the canons from taking offence at the use he had made of their money, he said to them, "Gentlemen, I entreat you to believe I make much account of your present, and that I shall never lose remembrance of it. Your intention was to give me the means, by your liberality, of furnishing my house; it came into my mind, and I believe it firmly, that our Lord will be better served and glorified by your money being spent on the poor in the hospital, who so much need it, than if it had been employed for my use. For what does a poor religious like myself want with furniture? No, gentlemen; do not think that though it has pleased God to raise me to this station, I forget what is due to my first condition."

He used great discernment and prudence

in ascertaining the dispositions of those under his charge, and to what they were naturally inclined, in order to accommodate himself to them, not in tolerating vice by a weak condescension, but in gaining their affections to lead them to good by the most safe and gentle ways; after the example of God Himself, who disposes all things in the world according to their nature.

To impress those whom he wished to win to God, he selected the most virtuous of his people to compose his household. He acted on the same principle with regard to his clergy, choosing the most pious and learned to assist him in the administration of his charge, to show how much he valued virtue and merit.

He found much to exercise his zeal and charity; the morals of the people in the kingdom of Valentia being dreadfully depraved, libertinism reigned there with impunity. In short, it was pitiable to see to see to what a state the affairs of his church were reduced, by the absence of those who preceded him. To cure this inveterate evil, he would not have recourse at first to harsh measures, but prudently waited a fitting time, when he might do so without injury to any one. He began the visitation of the churches in his

diocese by that of Valentia itself. There was neither town nor village where he did not preach. The zeal which he had always felt when preaching for the salvation of souls, was now increased by the consideration of what he owed to those under his care. In quality of father and pastor he spoke, as to his own children, for whom he was willing to shed his blood, if necessary for their good. According to Bishop Ceurian's account, the words which flowed from his lips in the pulpit, after he was archbishop, seemed to be, not the words of man, but fire from heaven.

It is impossible to say how many sins, both private and public, were forsaken and remedied by these visits; how many persons he comforted who were bowed down by the weight of their sorrows, and how many he saved who were on the brink of despair at the sight of their sins, or the wretchedness of their worldly affairs. How many heart-burnings, law-suits and quarrels, did he not bring to a happy termination. In fine, how many souls did he not draw from the gates of hell into the way of salvation. He published a plenary indulgence for all that was passed, as well for ecclesiastics as seculars, with an entire remission of the punishment

they had deserved, entreating them with torrents of tears to do better for the future, and to begin to serve God according to their station; otherwise he should be compelled to have recourse to justice and his authority to punish those who had abused his mercy.

When returned from his visits he assembled a Synod at Valentia, where he wished all his priests to meet. It was held for three days, when he attended carefully to all their remonstrances and complaints, making in their presence all the rules necessary for the improvement of their churches and themselves; ecclesiastical affairs being in a deplorable state. As in this place his authority was great, he did not fail to exercise it on several of his priests who were inclined to rebel, some even going so far as to protest against his orders. The rest he won by gentleness and the power of reasoning, and the statutes made in the synod were published to the satisfaction of all parties. His ecclesiastics were edified by his prudence and holiness, and were resolved to maintain in their parishes what had been decided on in the synod.

CHAPTER II.

ST. THOMAS WHEN ARCHBISHOP PRESERVED THE SAME POVERTY AND MODESTY AS WHEN A SIMPLE RELIGIOUS; AND HIS NEW DIGNITY NEVER MADE HIM FORGET HIS FIRST CONDITION.

IN the generality of men it is so common a thing to see the manners change with the condition, that the experience of the ancient Romans made this truth pass into a proverb, *Magistratus virum probat;* there being nothing more calculated to put the spirit of a man to the proof, than the raising him to responsible employments and dignities. Holy Scripture furnishes us with a striking example of this in the history of Saul. Before he was king he was called the friend of God, full of His Spirit, and with a heart pure and sincere as that of an infant. But he so perverted and changed that heart when elevated to the throne, that God drove him from it, in spite of all the tears and prayers of the prophet Samuel, which were not powerful enough to stay the hand of Divine Justice. It is then, a great proof and strong argument, that virtue has taken deep root in a man's heart when he is seen to

practise it as perfectly amidst honors and dignities as in a low estate.

After St. Thomas became archbishop he never lost a particle of that modesty, humility, and poverty, which he was accustomed to practise in the cloister. He was outwardly poor, as well as poor in spirit, and truly loved that evangelical poverty he had professed, like all who have known and practised it, and who have said things of it which, if not certain and well approved, might seem exaggerated. For several years he wore the same habit as at the monastery, and did not change it till it was no longer wearable. He did the same with his under garments, causing his shirts to be repieced, and when they were too old to be used, he commanded two to be made into one. As long as his doublet could be worn by putting new sleeves to it, he would not give it up, but dressed himself in it, shabby as it was, to the very last. He mended his stockings himself, keeping for that purpose a needle and thread and other useful necessaries.

Perhaps some may think that these things were unworthy of an archbishop, and beneath his dignity, and that at any rate his historian would have done well to omit them; yet in the sight of God they may have great merit.

And if we consider the spirit which prompted him to act in this manner, we shall see in them the effects and certain marks of his love of evangelical poverty, and also his wish to spare expense, that he might have more to bestow upon the poor of Jesus Christ.

The whole eleven years that he was archbishop he had but two habits, one white* and

* The Augustinians have worn the white habit as well as the black, for many centuries—the black, because that color was worn by their Founder, the white through devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and as being typical of innocence and purity of soul, as the black is of penitence and austerity. Both habits are of woollen stuff, called serge. The form of either differs but slightly. The black is a loose fitting tunic, with large sleeves, girded at the waist by a black cincture of hide or skin, and a cowl (sometimes called capuche) or cape for the shoulders, with a hood attached for the head. This is the usual form of the black habit. On feast days, large and wide flowing sleeves, that reach down nearly to the ancle, are worn, fastened to the shoulder, and a wide mantle that falls in easy folds from the shoulders to the ground. The white habit is of the same style as the black, but with this difference, that besides the tunic and cowl, is worn the scapular, *i. e.*, a long piece of white serge (the width of the shoulders) that falls down in front and behind, under the cowl. The dress of the religious is in each one of its parts typical of some one of the three vows he has taken—the cowl, of obedience, the tunic of poverty, the cincture of chastity, while the long flowing sleeves are indicative of the virtue of charity, and the scapular in token of bondage to his Queen, the Mother of God. In Ireland in the olden times, the white habit was worn by all ecclesiastics, monks, hermits or others. This was as much because there the wool of the sheep is generally white, (in Africa, black), as in contradistinction to the ordinary dress of the pagan priests, who wore a dress of a dark color, *i. e.*, of an ash or fawn color, or black. Gocellinus says of St. Patrick that

one black, both of common stuff of low price. When about to purchase one, a friend persuaded him to let it be of a thinner kind of stuff, so as to be light and more befitting an archbishop. He consented, thinking it would cost less, but on finding out his mistake, he begged his friend to take it back again.

"he went clothed in white, so as to witness to the rule he followed, to the candor of humility and the innocence of his life. Wherefore, in Ireland, religious following the example set by St. Patrick, were content with a simple dress, which for many centuries was of the wool of the sheep and without dye." (*In Vita S. Patricii*, c. 8.) Elsius, who gives the same version as the above, adds this, that "after paganism was driven from Ireland, all then began to wear the black habit, using the white only for indoors." In the beginning of the XIVth century, a decree was impending from the Supreme Pontiff, which aimed at depriving the Hermits of St. Augustine of their white habit. This was at the instance of some Dominican Fathers, who wished it exclusively for their own wear. Our history says that accordingly a number of holy religious (Augustinians) living at Perugia, met in prayer before an image of the Blessed Virgin, and imploring her aid, made a vow that if *her* dress was spared them, the whole Order would ever afterwards read an Office weekly in her honor. The grace sought was granted, the decree suspended, and the vow fulfilled from that time to this. Hence the Augustinians were sometimes styled "*Gratiani*," *i. e.*, "Religious of the Grace," or "*Marianites*," a fitting title, since Holy Father Augustine had so sturdily defended the dogma of Divine Grace from the mischievous construction put upon it by heretics. He too was the first to teach the ejaculatory (now so common in the Church) the *Deo Gratias*—(Psal. 132, and lib. III, *contr. Cresconium*, cap. 37.) In 1603 the Hermits of St. Augustine were for a third time about to lose their white dress, had not the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Clement VIII, by decree of the 2d of October, put a final stop to all further disquiet and annoyance.

"Sir," said he, "you have a right to wear this thin cloth, you are master of your own property; but I, who am but a poor religious, and who have nothing that does not belong to the poor, cannot use the stuff you have brought me without doing them an injury." His friend, to satisfy him, took it for his own use, and bought for the holy prelate a common and thick serge, which he wore till it was so shabby his servants were ashamed of it, and blushed to see him so poorly clothed. So much were they distressed, that they agreed to petition him in a body to leave it off. The Saint acquiesced, and caused another robe equally coarse to be made; nevertheless, he kept the old one to mend the other when necessary; and was generally so poorly and meanly dressed, that the most humble religious would have found it hard to imitate him without blushing.

The public profession the Saint made of poverty displeased some of the children of the world; because they looked on it only with the eyes of the flesh. In his cathedral even, there were some canons to whom it was unpleasant, and who entreated him for the honor of the Church he governed, to be better clothed, urging that his dress was not conformable to his dignity. He answered

them, smiling, and in a manner both playful and serious, "Gentlemen, I am much obliged to you for the care you take of my person, but really I do not see how my dress as a religious interferes with my dignity as archbishop. You well know that my authority and the duties of my charge are quite independent of my dress, and consist rather in taking care of the souls committed to me. But if, notwithstanding, you wish me to wear any other habit, I will cheerfully do so, provided you prove to me that I do nothing by that contrary to the profession I have made." An answer so just and holy received no reply on their part, except that they besought him at least to wear a cap of a finer material than the one he then had. He yielded to their request, and to satisfy them, used a cap of thinner stuff.

He was no less economical in the expenses of his table than in his dress. He was as frugal as when a religious. He never permitted anything but the most common food to be served, except when he ate in company, when another dish was added. Still he himself never exceeded the little he was accustomed to take amongst his brethren. At the end of each month he examined his accounts, and if his expenses of one week

exceeded another, he was disturbed, and warned his steward to take care, for that the wealth of the archbishop did not belong to the archbishop, but to the poor; and that before God he was obliged to restore to them whatever was expended in superfluities, and that he should carefully watch that our Lord was not displeased in this respect. He had no tapestry, and whatever they could do or say, he would never allow his room to be better carpeted than others. His steward having once bought a small carpet, and also, thinking it a great bargain, a piece of satin, on which was woven the descent from the cross, the Saint reproved him with some severity for the expense he had incurred, but at the same time said, "This piece of satin we will keep in consideration of what it represents, especially as it will be of use in the church for the preacher's chair. As for this little carpet, put it in the chapel where I say mass, but take care another time to buy nothing for the ornament of my house, but remember that I am a religious who has made a vow of poverty." His couch was a field-bed, with a mattress and two coverings; curtains, but no sheets, which he never used except when ill, so great was his love of penance and holy poverty. He had no plate except a salt-

cellar and a dozen spoons, which were placed on the table when he had company. His steward once told him that what he had expended in buying earthenware plates and dishes, which were constantly being broken, would have sufficed to buy a service of silver. "Do you think I am not aware of this?" said he; "I have seen and well considered it, but as I am a religious, I must remain within the bounds of my first condition; what would do honor to another, would be for me a shame and disgrace."

We see, then, that honors and dignities produced no change whatever in our Saint. He was as humble and poor under the mitre as he had been in the cloister. He would have no other arms than those of St. Augustine, a heart wounded and pierced, engraved upon the seal of office. When asked what he would have, he replied, "Those of my order, because there is neither nobility nor dignity that I value before the honor that God has done me in calling me by His mercy into holy religion."

CHAPTER III.

OF THE TIME EMPLOYED BY ST. THOMAS IN PRAYER, AND THE FAVORS HE RECEIVED IN THAT HOLY EXERCISE.

THE holy archbishop knew well by the light of his own mind, as well as that imparted to him by God, the great labors and dangers which offices, having the care of souls, draw after them. And though he also knew he had done his utmost to prevent his election, yet the burden was so intolerable to him, that he never afterwards experienced lightness or joy of heart. He could never hear himself called archbishop without a feeling of deep and bitter regret that he could not resign his charge, and pass the rest of his days in his cell. In truth, seven years after his promotion, when the emperor passed from Flanders into Spain, and was expected at Barcelona, he wrote to him, by Dr. de la Porte, entreating him to name another to the church of Valentia, which he was resolved to quit, from the pain and grief of heart he suffered under so heavy a weight, but would not do so until his majesty's arrival, nor without his consent.

The emperor answered, he intended shortly to visit Valentia, and they could then consult together as to what would be most expedient for the service of God and his own consolation; thus eluding his request and leaving the affair undecided. The holy prelate said afterwards, that there were two causes of his uneasiness, which made him especially anxious to find the means of giving up his archbishopric. The first, was the account he should have to render to God of those Moors who lived in his diocese. Having received in baptism the name and character of Jesus Christ, he was their pastor, and as such, charged with the care of their souls; and yet he had no power to soften their hard hearts, but had the sorrow of seeing them apostatize every day from the faith, through the most deplorable blindness. This was the reason also that he had so steadily refused the archbishopric of Granada, offered him by the emperor when he held his court at Toledo, and that he would in like manner have refused that of Valentia if he had not been compelled by holy obedience to accept it. The second, was the bad conduct and too great liberty of the ecclesiastics of his time. This he considered an enormous evil, deploring it with tears of blood; while at the

same time he saw, with the deepest feeling of sorrow, that it was not in his power to remedy it to the extent he would wish. He knew that amongst them were rich and powerful men, who would resist his orders; and to undertake their reformation he foresaw would be of little avail, and perhaps endanger the peace and quiet of the province. He mourned deeply that he could not further the general reform of his diocese, by beginning at the house of God; since those who ought to have been the first to unite with him in the good work, were the first to put obstacles in his way.

The only comfort the holy pastor found in this distress of mind, was in prayer. Prayer that enabled him to support so heavy a cross as the care of his flock, and to exert himself to the utmost to lead them to God by the safest and surest ways. His oratory was the tabernacle, to which, like Moses, he ran to learn of God what he should do, and how he should act in the difficulties which he every day encountered. Our Saint was possessed of a great understanding, an exquisite judgment, and much experience, yet he seemed to make no account of these advantages. He placed such entire confidence in God and in prayer, that before resolving

on any affair, however trifling, he always consulted Him in this holy exercise. When spoken to on any business, he would say, "I will consider of it, I will say mass to-morrow, and will recommend this affair to our good Lord, that it may please Him in His great mercy to conduct it well." He spent the greatest part of his time in prayer. His servants had but to go to his oratory, to be sure to find him. Sometimes they saw him in an ecstasy, or shedding torrents of tears; at other times extended upon the ground in the form of a cross. Whenever they found him thus, they retreated as though they had not seen him, lest his humility should have caused him to be distressed. Yet his love of prayer never made him neglect his duties. He left his oratory and his prayer the moment he was called; then having concluded the business, returned without loss of time. He had given strict orders to his servants to fetch him immediately he was wanted, "Because," said he, "besides the weariness the people feel in waiting, we shall have to give an account of all the time we have caused our neighbor to lose, as well as that we waste ourselves. Never mind whether I am praying or studying; for although it may be unpleasant to be interrupted,

still I am not my own; as a bishop, I belong to my flock." As our Saint placed all his cares and all his occupations in the hands of God, and undertook nothing but under His auspices, our Lord blessed him in every thing he did.

He never turned away a servant that he had once admitted to his household, nor changed his officers, except to advance their interests, and give them better employment. And the reason he was so well served was, that he chose his servants at the foot of the altar, by the gift of discerning spirits that he had received from God, so that his choice could not be followed by repentance. The very first time he saw Dr. de la Porte, he looked at him attentively, and then immediately appointed him one of his visitors. And when the doctor, being a very humble man, objected that he was not worthy of this employment, and entreated to be excused, the holy prelate replied, "You say and do just what you ought, but for all that it is my wish that you do as I tell you, because I hope that God will be glorified by your services; and I do not think I am mistaken in this idea." In the same manner he chose Dr. Ceurien as his suffragan, in spite of all the excuses he offered; amongst others, that he was not

fitted for such an office, and did not believe he had the necessary acquirements to discharge it well. "Do not say that," replied the Saint; "when I entered the episcopate I was not more fitted for it than you, but God who called me, without any wish on my part, as you well know, has led and assisted me by His grace and mercy. Obey then my commands; for if His Divine goodness has called you, and chosen you to serve Him in this ministry, He will abundantly provide you with all the help you can need."

He had also received the gift of counsel, to resolve the difficulties of those who came to him for advice. Poor curates and others often came to consult him, or to complain of ill treatment. Now, though it often happened that they spoke in anger, he listened to them with the greatest patience; always having his heart raised to God, praying interiorly for him who spoke to him, that he might be enlightened, and prevented from offending his God by the unruly passions which agitated him. Then under the pretence of some business, he would go into his oratory to beg the assistance of our Lord, and after praying with many tears he would return, and give answers so just and conformable to the necessities of each, that he even astonished himself.

In his time, the greater part of the bishops of Castile passed through Valentia to go to the Council of Trent, and lodged with him on the way. He entered deeply into the necessities of the Church, and told them, that though the principal object of the Council was to extirpate the new-born heresy in Germany, it was no less necessary to aim at a reformation of life and morals, so corrupt in all sorts of persons. He expressed great sorrow that he was not able to accompany them, on account of the many maladies with which he was afflicted. But the Saint, though he could not assist in body, endeavored to be present in spirit, by the advice and counsels he gave, as to what ought to be done. He gave his proxy to the bishop of Nuesca, and gave to all some writings, exhorting them all to have confidence in our Lord of the good success of this holy Council, which He had promised.

One of these prelates, returning some years after into Spain, said that the advice given by the archbishop concerning the Council, had been very well received by all the fathers; and that they had followed his opinion in every instance, with two exceptions. The first was, that the Fathers of the Council should make a rule, that henceforth

no bishop should be allowed to exchange his bishopric for another, in order that, hoping for nothing better than what he possessed, he might be more devoted to the care of the church to which God had called him. The second was, that all cures and benefices having the care of souls might be provided with priests natives of the place, providing they were well qualified, that fathers and mothers might be more careful to bring up their children to virtue and knowledge, in the hope of one day seeing them rectors and vicars in their own parishes. For though it might not be always possible, it would be especially advantageous in country churches; they would be better served, having a greater number of pious and learned priests.

This admirable gift of counsel was never more appreciated, than when death deprived the province of the services of St. Thomas. Every one exclaimed that his decease was still more to be lamented, on account of the loss of his advice and counsel, than the temporal alms which he gave to the poor, great and extensive though they were.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND THE POWER HE HAD RECEIVED FROM GOD OVER DEMONS.

ALTHOUGH the gift of prophecy and the power of driving devils from the bodies of men are not certain proofs of the holiness of him in whom they reside, since, according to Scripture, there have been sinners and enemies of God who possessed them, yet it is certain, that where these gifts are joined to virtue and the observance of the divine commands, and it is seen plainly that the person in whom God has placed them seeks nothing else than His glory and the good of his fellow-men, it is certain that they increase wonderfully the holiness of those who make a right use of them. Such was the case with our Saint. Our Lord gave him power over devils, and often revealed to him future things which it was impossible he should know in a natural way. Of several instances I will relate some of the most remarkable.

The holy prelate, as I have before said, mourned in the depths of his heart over the

torrent of crimes and abominations with which the world was deluged; and wept before God continually, beseeching Him by His holy grace to remedy all these disorders. Now as it is most natural that the lips should utter the fervent desires of the heart, he often spoke on this subject to his friends. One day, having celebrated mass with many tears and much devotion for the necessities of the Church, he said, on leaving the altar, to Dr. de la Porte, "Now let us praise God, and doubt no longer that He will soon provide for the wants of His Church, for I assure you that by His mercy He has revealed it to one of His servants." The next day a courier arrived at Valentia with letters from Pope Paul III. for the convocation of the council which the Saint earnestly desired as the best means of improving the condition of the holy Church.

Again: in the year 1552, the priests of the parish of St. Catherine of Valentia wished to get possession of the great chapel for their place of burial. The parishioners objected, saying, they had no right to it, and that it would be an injury to the public, as it was built by the alms of the parish. The difference was laid before the archbishop, who, after weighing the arguments on both sides,

took the part of justice, and forbid the priests to take possession of the chapel. "Choose some other place in the church," said he, "for your place of burial, and leave this chapel; you will one day want it. Your church will be burnt, and you will then be glad that persons of fortune have had the chapel for their burying-place, since, in gratitude for this privilege, they will contribute more than you could possibly do for the rebuilding of your church." Thirty-two years after, in the year 1584, the prophecy of the Saint was fulfilled. The church was burnt to ashes, but the chapel received no injury.

A gentleman at the point of death was once recommended to the prayers of St. Thomas. He said mass for him, and on leaving the altar, said to Dr. de la Porte, "Be comforted, your friend will not die. Go and tell him that a physician named Aguilar will know his complaint, and that by his advice and remedies he will recover his health."

One of his friends, a merchant, had communicated to him his intention of marrying one of his daughters, and recommended the affair to his prayers; but without awaiting the Saint's answer he married her, and returned soon afterwards with a joyful countenance,

expressing his satisfaction at the alliance. "You are pleased at this marriage," said the Saint, "and I am sorry for it. You begged me to recommend this affair to God. I have done so; and if you had returned to me as you ought, I should have told you not to conclude it. After your death this marriage will be the ruin of your house; your daughter will be miserable, and will pass the rest of her days in sorrow." It happened exactly as he had predicted.

Another friend, who came to tell him with great joy that his wife had given birth to a son, was answered with these words: "Pray for the mother and the child. He will die in a few years of a violent and disastrous death, which will try you much." This happened also. For when the child advanced in years, he gave himself up to a dissolute life, and was killed in an encounter with an evil companion, his father being entirely ruined by a lawsuit to revenge his death.

The power he had received from our Lord over devils was not less remarkable than his gift of prophecy; for the Divine Goodness is accustomed to confer these graces and favors on the humble of heart, as if He would recompense their humility by lowering the pride of the devils in subjecting them to the will

of the saints and the truly humble. There was once so terrible a tempest in the city of Burgos, where the Saint was superior, that the winds, accompanied by thunder and whirlwinds, overthrew some houses, and injured a great many others. St. Thomas immediately went to pray before his crucifix, and while praying, our Lord revealed to him the cause of this agitation in the air. He climbed the steeple, and throwing his eyes around, he perceived a number of devils, under the form of different animals, who caused these whirlwinds and storms. Having commanded them in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to depart, they obeyed, and left the air serene and tranquil. Another time, also at Burgos, they brought a demoniac into the church of the convent. The Saint did not at first release him; but the demon dared not, in his presence, torment the poor man, nor make his ordinary grimaces.

One morning, having sent all his religious to pray in the chapel of the Holy Crucifix, he led in the possessed, who seemed to dart fire and flames from his eyes and mouth, so great was his fury. He was instantly delivered, the devil going out of this poor body with horrible howlings, with no further injury to it than leaving it extremely weak. The Saint

gave thanks to God for his deliverance, and then turning to his religious, said, "Fathers and brethren, I have convoked you here for two reasons. Because, in the first place, I know the power of united prayer; and in the second, I considered that if our Lord has done this wonder, and shown His mercy on account of the merits of some one amongst us, he, whoever he may be, will be saved from the danger of vainglory and presumption, to which he might otherwise be exposed."

In the general visitation that St. Thomas made of his diocese the first year of his archiepiscopate, they brought to him at Alcoy, a girl possessed by so outrageous a devil, that neither exorcisms nor the other means that the church usually employs on such occasions, had any effect. The holy prelate prayed to God for her; and after mass which he celebrated one Saturday with that intention, he ordered the vicar of the parish the next day at Prone, to discover before the people all that he had seen and heard of this demon; and also what the Saint had said to him in private about him. "And be sure," said he, "that he will soon abandon this poor creature, because, as he is an extremely proud and haughty spirit, and imagines we do not know his stratagems, he will be confounded when

he sees that we know and publish his weakness." The next day all was done as he desired, and the girl was cured. He also delivered by his prayers a young lady of Valentia, who had been possessed for a long time, without those about her being able to discover whether it was by a good or an evil spirit. A doctor named Halaya, to whom they brought her to confess, discovered by very evident marks that it was the devil who spoke by her mouth; yet he only laughed at him, and did not cease tormenting her even in his presence. At last they brought her to the archbishop. He made her come into the church, and after having prayed and said mass for her, she was perfectly cured.

CHAPTER V.

OF HIS HUMILITY AFTER HE BECAME ARCHBISHOP.

THE holy fathers who treat of prayer, say, that it is a virtue which pierces heaven; and that to soar on high, it makes use of two other virtues as wings, Faith and Humility. By the light of faith, we discover how powerful and merciful God is, in relieving our necessities, and loading us with benefits; and by humility, we see our own misery and helplessness, and we hasten to throw ourselves into the arms of His goodness and clemency.

The connexion between prayer and humility, naturally leads me to carry on the history of St. Thomas, by treating in this chapter of his humility, having spoken in a former one of his gift of prayer. In all the states through which he passed before his elevation to the episcopal throne, he had always preserved sentiments of deep and genuine humility; but after entering the prelacy, the depth and intensity of those feelings increased. He always believed himself un-

worthy of the high ministry to which our Lord had called him. The sweetness and affability with which he treated every one, testified that he knew how to practise the saying of the wise man, "Be so much the more mild and humble when raised to a higher dignity." The poor and the rich were admitted equally to his house. And without making exception to any one, he accommodated all according to the state and quality of each. He had no porter, as was then the custom; the man at his door was merely kept that he might be informed more quickly when he was wanted by any one, whether at study or prayer. At his house there were no antechambers and cabinets to be passed through before reaching his presence. The doors were closed only at night; the whole of the day they were left open, that all those who wished it might have access to him at any hour. His house was always crowded with the poor, the old, the blind, and the needy, who came to tell him of their troubles and their miseries. Instead of avoiding the visits of these poor people, he received them with so much kindness and humanity, that to show his affection, and to give them more freedom and confidence, he seated them near himself, conversing amiably with them to put them at their

ease. Never did he show the least disgust, however poor and ragged they might be, and he often remained with them for hours, comforting them, and exhorting them to bear with patience their anguish and their griefs. Sometimes it happened that the poor entering his hall, and not knowing him on accouut of his mean attire, would ask him if Dr. de la Porte was in his room, that they might go there to receive their alms. This person was his Visitor, and the principal distributor of his alms. "Wait a moment, my friends," he would say, "I will go directly and call him." And then he would go and tell the doctor that the poor waited for him, and beg him to go quickly and attend to them with love and charity. His heart was so tender and full of goodness that he could not see any one in affliction without being sensibly touched. And even when at table, if he remembered having seen any one cast down or sad, he would rise and not return till he had entirely consoled him, considering so charitable an action as the most exquisite dish of his repast.

There are three things which are certain effects of the virtue of humility. The first is, the not discarding or looking down upon one's poor relations when one is raised above them, and not blushing if they are in a mean

and contemptible situation of life. The second is, to fly whatever savors of pomp and ostentation; and the third, to grant requests with facility, and easily to accept excuses and reasons which are offered, as well on account of the esteem the truly humble man feels for others, as the low opinion he entertains of himself. These three effects of humility were wonderfully united in our holy prelate. His origin was low, as I have before said, and though his father was well enough off, it is certain that he had a number of relations who were poor. But he never despised them for their poverty. On the contrary, neither dazzled with the splendor of the episcopal dignity, nor the high estimation in which he was held throughout the world; he was always pleased to entertain them in his house, and was desirous they should all call him their relation. One day when he was on important business with the bishops of Tortosa and Segovia, an uncle of his arrived at his house, with a linen apron hung from his neck after the fashion of the peasants of Castile. He showed much joy at seeing him, and saluted him warmly in the presence of his company. "You are welcome, uncle," said he, "be seated. Their lordships will excuse my asking news of my

mother and relations." He spoke to him with so much sweetness and affability, that the spectators were not less edified than surprised with his holy simplicity. Then he called his steward to entrust him to his care, saying, "Go and rest yourself, uncle, as soon as I have finished here you shall see me." Then turning towards the bishops, he told them that this was his uncle, the brother of his mother. Another time a cousin-german came to Valentia, not so much to see and visit the archbishop, as to obtain from him a sum of money. He received this cousin with the same affability and kindly welcome, and kept him nearly a month in his house, and then inquired into the state of his affairs. "They are bad enough," replied the man, "since of two oxen that I possessed, one is dead, so that I am obliged to stop my work." "Ah well," said the Saint, "I will give you enough to buy another, not in consideration of my relationship, but to assist you in the extremity of your affairs. I give this on condition you ask nothing more of me, because what I have is not my own, nor have I any right to enrich my relations with it, but it is entrusted to my care to help the poor." Similar meetings often took place with relations whom he loved and caressed. But he

never forgot the rules which justice and charity required in the distribution of the ecclesiastical revenues.

He abhorred also whatever in the least partook of pomp and grandeur. There would be no end to the relation of what he has said and written on this subject. In his house everything bore the stamp of simplicity and poverty. But his desire of leading an entirely apostolic life was especially seen in his public appearances, when he would not allow a throne to be raised for him, nor a carpet to be spread under his feet in the church. The first time that he preached in his cathedral, he endured with difficulty the piece of brocade with which the pulpit was dressed on his account; and on leaving it he strictly prohibited the sacristan from ever again dressing it for him, but to let it remain as it was usually for others. And although Don Jerome Carros d'Estavo, vicar-general of the chapter, entreated that for the honor of the Church and his own dignity, the pulpit might be dressed when he preached, he could never obtain his request, excepting that he allowed him to hang on a corner of it some small piece of embroidery, from which he might draw instruction for the people. At the solemn festivals when he celebrated pon-

tifically, he was never vested sitting; nor was he pleased at seeing around him so many servants and ministers; but preferred that the sacristan should assist him to vest, as he did the other priests. Nothing could be more poor and simple than his usual ornaments. All the enrichment of his chapel consisted in some old painted linen, and except the alb and amice which he had, he was obliged to borrow from the cathedral whatever was necessary for the celebration of the sacrifice when he wished to say mass. He had recourse also to the cathedral for the cross and chalice. His mitre was of plain white damask, without any ornament. In his visitations he generally used whatever he found in the parish churches, however poor and shabby they might be. However, it is certain, that his not being provided with the ornaments that other prelates possessed, arose neither from avarice nor carelessness. He whom our Lord had endowed with so rare a judgment and singular virtues could be guilty of neither. But he deprived himself of these things in favor of the poor, on whom he bestowed all that he thus saved. Joined to this consideration, came in his vow of poverty and his extreme love of humility. Now it happened by a special providence of

God, that what in others gave rise to contempt, was in his case a subject of edification, and a powerful motive for increased reverence, to those who saw his sweetness and affability in so elevated a position.

The third effect of humility which I mentioned, was beyond everything perfect and admirable in this Saint. He treated his priests with much honor and respect, appearing to forget he was their superior. When discoursing with them he would insist upon their not standing, but would seat them close to his side, and listen to them in a most amiable manner, frequently preferring their opinions to his own. When he reproved them he often begged their forgiveness, if he feared he had pressed them too hard with his remonstrances.

Having once heard a very sad account of one of his canons, who was in reality a man of probity, but who had enemies who were so much the more dangerous as they appeared wise and moderate, he summoned him before him, and reproved him very severely. But no sooner had the canon justified himself, and clearly made out his own innocence and the malignity of his enemies, than the Saint embraced him, and said, "May God comfort you, as you have comforted me

by what you tell me! Pardon me, I entreat you; for I assure you that if I were at liberty to name the persons who have so deceived me, you would judge as I did, that they were worthy of credit." A complaint was also made against another canon, who was in reality guilty. The mildness and benignity of the holy archbishop shone forth brightly in this instance. Having fully informed himself of the facts of the case, and seeing no amendment, he judged it proper, in order not to connive at vice, to call him into his presence. He showed him his fault, and the scandal it produced, and entreated him to correct himself and amend his life, and thus spare his archbishop the pain of correcting him. The canon, instead of profiting from this remonstrance and charitable advice, flew into a rage, and said, that being a member of the Holy Office, he was not amenable to him, nor would he recognize him as judge, with many other inconsiderate words. To so great a height did he carry his impertinence, that one of the domestics wished to arrest him, but the mild and gentle prelate would not allow him. "Let him depart," said he, "it is not his fault; it is I who have been wrong in giving the occasion of it by my remonstrances against what he has done,

which were a little too rough." However, the officers of the Inquisition heard of the offence their coadjutor had committed, and put him in prison, judging that they could not let it pass with impunity, without injury to the love and respect they bore the Saint. They dispatched a messenger to the archbishop, informing him that if he thought good they would send the criminal to him, to be chastised as he thought proper, otherwise they were resolved to punish him as he deserved. The holy prelate, who was just sitting down to table when the message arrived, was so sensibly affected, that he went immediately to the Inquisition, beseeching the Inquisitors to release him instantly, assuring them that it was he who had given cause to what had passed. He was so earnest with them, that he protested he would not leave them till they gave up the prisoner into his hands. At length he gained his end, and to show his joy, like the good shepherd who has found his lost sheep, he embraced him with tenderness, and shed many tears over him. Then having to return to his house, he wished to have his company through the town, that by his familiar and friendly manner towards him he might stifle the rumors which were already abroad of his imprisonment, on ac-

count of his having insulted the archbishop; and also that his honor and reputation might be preserved in the estimation of those who saw them conversing thus together.

CHAPTER VI.

ST. THOMAS HAD NO RESPECT TO PERSONS.—OF HIS CONTEMPT FOR ALL CREATED THINGS.—OF HIS EVANGELICAL LIBERTY.

IT sometimes happens that mildness and humility are rather the effects of a natural weakness and low-mindedness, than a true virtue of the soul. This is easily discovered when a want of resolution in resisting evil is seen. True humility, which is not a weakness of nature, but a holy and admirable virtue, can bear to be abased, and to give up its own interest to that of another, when the glory of God or the good of a fellow-creature requires it; while at the same time it knows how to act with courage and firmness when it is expedient and right to do so. To show that what has been already said of the humility of St. Thomas in all his actions, could not be looked upon as the effect of natural

meanness, but proceeded from true virtue as its principal and proper origin, it must be made clear how free he was from all inordinate affection to relations, friends, wealth, honors, and all sorts of human considerations, that he might preserve himself in that high and holy liberty of mind, of which he made such admirable use on every occasion in which he was engaged by the duties of his charge. Though his respect and tender affection for his mother were so great, he never allowed her more than a hundred crowns a year, until she became aged, when remembering that at his solicitation she had deprived herself of all her wealth to enrich the poor, he knew she must require more assistance in her infirmities. He gave two hundred crowns a year to each of his brothers, and forty to his uncle, because they had families which they were unable to support without this alms. The Saint once sent a domestic, named Gabriel Trovado, to inquire after his mother. She charged him expressly to say to her son, that he should remember she was mother of an archbishop, and that the hundred crowns he paid her yearly was not sufficient to support so many poor who came to lodge in her house, which she still kept for that purpose. However, she could never obtain anything more from him. "I have,"

said he, "sent my mother what I know is necessary for the support of her house. If she were here, I might see what I could do. As it is, I give her sufficient to live conformably to the customs of the country, and to her condition. If she wishes to give more to the poor than I send her, I cannot help her, since the revenues of the archbishopric of Valentia belong to the poor of Valentia, and I should act against my conscience in distributing them to others."

His brothers used often to complain also, that he did not take into consideration the size of their families in his small allowance, and begged him to increase it. He refused them also; and to induce them to labor and manage their affairs with prudence, he told them at once and decidedly, that they had nothing more to hope for from him. His other relations who solicited his charity he treated in exactly the same manner, giving them just what was necessary, as he did others, and no more. One day he showed much displeasure towards a nephew who had come to inform him of his daughter's marriage with a doctor. From the inequality of rank, he could not approve this alliance, and spoke very strongly to the father on the subject. "What!" said he several times, "the

daughter of a peasant to a man of letters! you have done wrong." His treasurer, who was present, to appease him, and at the same time to please the father who was confused and astonished, said, "It seems to me there is not so great a disparity between the parties. The daughter of the nephew of an archbishop deserves at least some advantage. And then it is very easy to remedy all the rest by adding to her dowry whatever your Lordship may think proper." "God forbid," said the good prelate, "that I should ever commit such a fault. The revenues of bishops are not given them to enrich their relations, but to assist the poor." He then commanded him to give his nephew fifty crowns. "Take this, nephew," said he, "it will suffice for the expenses of your journey; but expect nothing more from me. What I have is not mine, but belongs to the poor of my diocese."

Two other relations went to spend the festival of Christmas with him, to offer him the good wishes of the season, and also hoping to obtain some gift from him. But they were disappointed. For though he received them with joy and a hearty welcome, yet he gave them only what was just necessary to defray all their travelling expenses. One of the two told him he was greatly in want of a mule for

labor; he gave him the money, but for fear he should spend it in any other way, he made him buy the mule before he set out. He treated in the same manner one of his relations who came with the intention of remaining in his service. He received him with affection and affability, kept him some time in his house, and then dismissed him, giving him what was necessary to take him back to his own country, and nothing more. Some marks of dissatisfaction appeared in the behavior of this man. "How!" said the Saint to him, "does it seem to you that I have given you but little? Do you not know that I shall be called to account by God, if I dare to deprive the poor of what belongs to them? Certainly I should have given you nothing if I had not known that you needed wherewith to carry you home. Go then, and return no more with the idea that I shall ever enrich you, remembering that whatever I possess does not belong to me, but to the poor of the province."

As the holy archbishop was entirely free from all inordinate affection to his relations, so was he also free from consideration to rank or any other human distinction. Nothing ever induced him to lower his character by a base condescension or cowardly compli-

ance; nor was he ever known to flatter any one, or offer a useless compliment. He had received from our Blessed Lord an admirable freedom of spirit. His heart was great and generous, and filled with that apostolic vigor which St. Paul desired for his son Timothy. When at Valladolid he never paid visits to the emperor. He was only seen at court three or four times, and even then he had been brought there by charity for the salvation of some miserable beings. Though he was the emperor's preacher, and was often solicited by the lords of his suite to visit him, and who assured him of his majesty's esteem and affection, yet he always declined, saying that his majesty had so much to occupy him, and those such weighty affairs, that he ought not to be approached unnecessarily; and that whenever he should do him the honor to command his services, he would always find him ready and willing to obey him.

This rule of not visiting the court he kept so strictly, that having gone from Burgos, where he was prior, to Valladolid to preach the Lent there before the emperor, he returned without speaking to him or paying him any compliment, because no occasion of charity had drawn him into his presence. The emperor was so anxious not to lose one

of his sermons while he was at Valladolid, that he gave orders to be informed whenever he preached at the convent. One Sunday that he was going to preach, the emperor arrived a little before the time, and going into the cloisters, he found the sacristan there. "Go," said he, "and tell the father prior that I am here." The sacristan went, and the Saint returned this answer, "Tell his majesty I am preparing to go into the pulpit. If he commands me to come to him, I shall not be able to preach; but if he wishes me to preach, he must excuse my coming to him." The sacristan acquitted himself of his commission, not without fear of displeasing the emperor by an answer which seemed to him not very civil. However, his majesty received it in very good part, and in a manner which showed his entire satisfaction, he said to those around him, "I wish all religious were like this good father, and that they had no more respect of persons than he has."

About this time there arose a question among the learned in Castile; and the casuists were consulted as to whether a certain thing could conscientiously be introduced into the kingdom, which would seem to lead in the end to the injury of the public, and perhaps be the entire ruin of the people.

The Saint, who was advised of this, felt obliged, in order to prevent the evil, to speak of it publicly before the emperor, finding that no one came forward to induce the council to reject it. Preaching then one day in his presence at Valladolid, he began in these words, "May I entreat your majesty to command that curtain to be undrawn? because having to address you individually, you will do me a great favor if you will allow me to see your countenance, that I may the better say what I wish." The emperor immediately ordered the curtain to be undrawn. "Sacred majesty," said the Saint, "I have been requested to tell you my judgment on a certain affair treated of in your council. I have but one word to say to your majesty, which is, most humbly to beseech you to consider with your usual zeal and prudence what are the characters of the persons who make this proposition, and who dare to charge themselves with an affair which is viewed with horror by all the wise, and all those who have any religious feelings." After a few more words uttered with great power, he concluded thus, "I have nothing more to say upon this subject. If your majesty pleases, you can command the curtain to be drawn." This liberty of speech astonished the audi-

ence, but it edified the emperor marvellously; who instead of being offended, approved it, and the high opinion he had formed of the preacher's sanctity was increased by it. From this we may judge what St. Thomas would do in reproving ordinary persons when archbishop, since he could speak in this manner to so great a monarch, while only a simple religious.

He received with civility the numerous letters written to him by princes and lords, and answered them with the same civility. But when asked to do anything which was not just and right, he added without ceremony that he should be most happy to serve them, but it was impossible to comply with their request, without breaking the laws of God, which it was not permitted him to do.

I could relate numberless instances of his strength of mind and generosity, if I did not fear being wearisome, for which reason I will cut this subject short by relating a circumstance which occurred between him and the emperor on an occasion no less remarkable than the preceding. News having reached Spain that the Turks were going to attack the island of Ivizza, the islanders sent deputies to the emperor, entreating him to build them a citadel. This demand was granted,

but not so quickly executed for want of finances. As the emperor had no resources in Spain, he was advised to apply to the archbishop of Valentia for the loan of twenty thousand crowns. The Saint replied to the deputies of the island and the imperial commissaries, that he humbly begged his majesty to excuse him; that he had nothing belonging to himself, nor could he lend him anything, the revenues of the archbishop being the property of the poor, and not his own. After some discussion, the officers begged him to consider the great need they had of this money, which was destined to be applied to the common good of Christianity, and again asked him on what conditions he would oblige them. "I quite understand the necessity of the case," said the good prelate, "but yet I cannot do it; because God has not placed the island of Ivizza under my care, as he has the diocese of Valentia. It is not just to use for the fortifications of Ivizza, money which is intended for the relief of the poor, whose prayers to God constitute the principal strength of states and empires." In short, he refused their demand, knowing it would be acting contrary to the will of God and the duties of his charge. They then began to tell him how much displeased the

emperor would be at his refusal and his resolute answers. "I should grieve," said he, "to give his majesty reason to be offended with me, but it would be much worse for me to offend God. But if unhappily his majesty is offended, here is the key of my cell, which I carry still at my girdle. And I assure you that I should very much prefer returning there to live and die, than to continue in a palace. And touching what you say as to the compassion I ought to feel towards this poor country, God knows I would contribute to its preservation against the infidels, at the price of my blood. But let us see what can be done. His majesty demands twenty thousand crowns. I cannot give them without injury to the poor; but let the sum be divided, and I will lend his majesty ten thousand, on condition he assigns me that sum by a secure bond to be returned at a certain time, otherwise I can do nothing without loading my conscience with a thing for which I shall be accountable one day to God." The agreement was made in this manner. He lent the ten thousand crowns, of which he received six thousand during his life, and the other four were paid afterwards, and employed in works of charity, according to the orders he left at his death, as will be seen in its proper

place. See how our Saint could unite gentleness and humility with firmness of mind, when he thought it necessary.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE CARE HE TOOK OF HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND THE CHARITY WITH WHICH HE TREATED ALL THOSE UNDER HIS JURISDICTION.

HAVING undertaken in this chapter to show with what prudence and charity this good pastor governed the flock entrusted to him, it is fitting to begin by examining his way of conducting his own house, since, as the apostle says, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"

The method which St. Thomas adopted in his household was perfectly pious and Christian. One of his rules was, never to receive any one into his service without speaking with him himself, and being careful to obtain information of his life and morals, at the same time making him thoroughly understand what he required from him, and what would be his employment. He afterwards pre-

scribed certain rules, of which the four following were the most important: In the first place, he was expected to live in peace with every one; and for this object he forbade any of his servants to meddle with the affairs of others, but to confine his attention strictly to what concerned himself; and, secondly, he enjoined them to be modest and very retired. He never allowed those in his employ, whoever they were, to go out without his express permission, treating them in this respect as if they had been in a monastery. All the doors of his house were closed before night, so that no one could possibly go out, even if he had had the inclination. His third rule was, that they were never to repeat anything of others, either to him or any one else. Lastly and principally, he enjoined them to be devout, never to fail at prayers, to frequent the Sacraments, to confess and communicate at the solemn festivals, and every first Sunday in the month, and to recite daily the little office of the Virgin, or, if they could not read, the Rosary. If he discovered that any of them had failed in his duty, he called him to him and corrected him as a father, regarding them all as his children. He particularly showed his paternal affection and charity when they were

sick, causing them to be attended with more care than in a similar case he would have allowed them to bestow on himself.

But as he knew the soul to be much more noble than the body, so did he bestow much more care upon the health of their souls than their bodies. From time to time he assembled them all together, and though he had two almoners capable of instructing them, yet he taught them himself, and gave them spiritual lessons in form of conferences; encouraging some and reproving others, and all with words so gentle and yet powerful, that they were led to their duty rather by love than fear. In addition to their wages he occasionally gratified them by something extraordinary. A servant of his, called Philip Jovier, having once received from him fifty crowns more than his due, wished to express his gratitude to his good master. "Take that, my son," said the kind prelate, "it is not in my power to give you more at present, for I am in debt to my treasurer, but continue to conduct yourself well, and I will endeavor for the future to be more liberal towards you." In his house experience justified the truth of the proverb, that the good master makes the good servant. For the holy archbishop had so formed his

domestics after his own example, that there was amongst them no other ambition than that of attaining to virtue. Complaints, murmurings, tale-bearings or detractions, were never heard in his house.

As detraction was a sin which the Saint held in especial horror, if he found himself in company with persons who spoke disadvantageously of others, he always defended the cause of the absent, and endeavored to do away with the unfavorable impression raised against them. "You do not look at this in a right point of view," he would say, "you are wrong, because he may have had a good intention; as for myself, I believe that he had." He was once asked by some poor miserable creature, to go and obtain of the emperor a favor. As soon as he entered the antechamber, all the lords who were in waiting, rose to do him honor, though he was at that time but a simple religious. Having prevailed on him to be seated, one of them began to speak of an absent person. The Saint, who soon perceived to what his discourse tended, interrupted him, and said, rising at the same time, "Sir, I humbly entreat you either to change this subject or permit me to retire, because if you continue any longer, I see clearly that God will be displeased." Being

at this moment summoned to the emperor, he was no sooner gone, than the constable of Castile, who was there, said to the others, "Truly, gentlemen, Father Thomas is a religious everywhere, as much at court as in the cloister; no respect of men will prevent him from being so, wherever he is."

We will now speak of the love and charity he felt universally for all who depended on him, and who lived under his jurisdiction in his diocese. The good archbishop entered so completely into their afflictions, and so tenderly compassionated them under their sorrows, that he passed the greater part of the night in his oratory, at the foot of the crucifix, beseeching our blessed Lord to grant the petitions which had been recommended to him the preceding day. And like another Jacob, he never quitted the holy struggle with God till he had received the blessing and the relief he had implored for his poor brethren. It is commonly said, that the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart; this axiom is true principally in persons who are humble, sincere, and without guile, such as was this great servant of God. At table, in the evenings, and in fact whenever he was with his friends, he scarcely discoursed on any other subject than the means

which could be found to remedy the wants of his people. "I beg of you as a favor," said he one day to Dr. de la Porte, "to comfort this poor man a little;" and at another time, "Let me recommend to you the wants and distresses of that poor widow." Such words as these were constantly on his lips, suggested by his fatherly care. He never showed the least sign of impatience, nor felt himself importuned by the number and assiduity of the poor people who had recourse to him incessantly. There was no time nor hour in which they were not at liberty to go to him. His charity towards his neighbor was so great, that he could conceive no evil to be without a remedy, nor any infirmity to be incurable. All his people had orders never to send any one away, to be affable to every one, and to call him to the first who inquired for him, telling them it was all his pleasure and consolation in this world to see his poor sheep run thus to their shepherd.

When the hospital, which had been destroyed by fire, was rebuilding, the good archbishop went almost every day to hasten the work; and solicited the men to labor hard, with so much zeal and earnestness, that one would have thought all the sick and poor had been his own brethren. On his first

arrival in Valentia, he took the bread as it were from his own mouth to feed them, giving them the four thousand crowns with which he had been provided for his own necessities; and immediately he received his revenues as archbishop, he sent a part to the hospital to advance the building; besides which he did not cease to recommend it to the charity of his auditors in all his sermons. He felt for all and each who gave alms to the hospital the same gratitude and obligation as he would have done if they had relieved his own necessities. Like the high-priest Aaron, who carried the names of the children of Israel written upon his shoulders and breast, this holy prelate carried his people in his heart and bore them on his shoulders, by supporting their infirmities and imperfections, and charitably providing for their miseries. His compassion for those who had fallen into sin was unbounded, as well as his zeal and gentleness in recovering them from it. He hated sin, but loved those to whose amendment he was instrumental. The souls that he drew from the gates of hell to those of heaven were so numerous, and there were so many persons who renounced their sinful courses and dedicated themselves entirely to the service of God,

that he who would undertake to give an account of them might fill volumes with this one subject alone. He spared neither labor, nor tears, nor blood, nor money, when necessary to save a soul; and sometimes he even yielded his rights, and declined exercising his authority, when expedient to do so for the same object. I will relate some examples of this. In one of the parish churches of Valentia, the choir having finished chanting the office one Good Friday, a certain priest who was standing at the altar where the Blessed Sacrament had been brought from the sepulchre, for what reason the history does not relate, fell into a passion, and called out and blasphemed in a horrible manner, to the great scandal of all who were assisting. The holy archbishop, who was informed of this outrage, called him into his presence, and reproved him with all the rigor that his offence deserved, intending to punish him severely. But no sooner did he witness his repentance, his deep sorrow and tears, than he said to him, "You know well that your blasphemy, joined to the scandal you have given, demand an exemplary punishment, and in truth, I was resolved, in accordance with my duty, to chastise you as you deserve; nevertheless I pardon you, since

you see and acknowledge your fault, and in imitation of our merciful Lord, who receives the sinner when he weeps and detests his crime, I will treat you with mildness. During three days you will fast and give alms to the poor of your parish, that they may pray to God for you; and as your fault has been public and scandalous, go into the church and be seen in the choir, but abstain from saying mass for fifteen days, that those who have witnessed the sin may also see that it is only as a penitent you dare to approach our Lord, after having so grossly offended Him at His holy altar."

Another time he was touched to the quick by an account that a layman brought him of an ecclesiastic, whom he accused of improper intercourse with a woman, and even of being the father of three children. Nevertheless, wishing to preserve his honor, the good archbishop defended him in such a way, that the accuser said to him, "Certainly, my lord, your goodness must be very great, since you defend even the wicked against justice." Without being piqued by this reproach, after having made inquiries to ascertain the truth of the affair, he dismissed his visitor, and sent for the priest into his oratory, and there gave him so severe a reproof, that in spite of his

attachment to the woman, and the pledge of their sacrilegious love, he protested that for the future all intercourse with her should cease. The Saint, who was overjoyed at seeing him so well disposed, confirmed him in his good resolutions, and to deprive him of the means of returning to his sinful course, he provided a husband for the woman, and took charge of the children; and when they were grown up, he provided for the two boys, and gave the girl so good a dowry, that she married respectably, as well as the mother.

Having learnt also that two other priests led bad lives, he summoned them separately into his oratory, after having for a long time supplicated the Almighty to touch their hearts, and there reproved them with so much zeal and effect, that they at once resolved to renounce their bad practices. For this purpose they for some time left the town to bewail their sins in solitude, and to prepare themselves to make an entire confession of their past lives; and both of them ever afterwards led strictly penitential lives. And when the good prelate learned that poverty had been the occasion of their fall, he assigned to each of them an annual pension, and at the same time gave their two accomplices a dowry, which placed them in a situa-

tion to marry honestly, and to serve God henceforth in the observance of the laws of holy matrimony.

Another priest was brought to him by the archers, who had taken him in the night, armed and dressed in an extravagant manner quite unbecoming his profession. They expected the Saint would immediately order him to prison, instead of which he desired them to leave him in his house, saying, "Be satisfied that I will pay what is due to you for your capture, the rest is my concern; it belongs to me to settle matters with this person." He then caused a bed to be prepared in his chamber, as soon as the archers were gone, and made him lie down, whilst he retired into his oratory to lay open his heart before God, and represent to Him this piteous spectacle; with burning tears conjuring His Divine Goodness not to permit the Blood which He had shed for this poor unhappy being, to have been shed in vain. After a long and fervent prayer he returned to the priest, and began to reprove and exhort him in words so powerful and full of the Spirit of God, that this man, who seemed to have lost all fear and compunction for his fault, seeing the excessive charity of his holy prelate, returned to his senses, made a firm

resolution to change his life, and to employ what remained of it in the service of God, by a holy and perfect penitence. At break of day the Saint took leave of him with these words, "Return to your house, my brother, return at once, and never forget the great mercy God has shown you this day. This is all the punishment I award you." The heart of the priest was truly changed, so that he made a full reparation by the holiness of his life for all the evil he had caused by his bad example. To avoid a wearisome repetition, I will now dismiss this subject, only saying, that the number, both of ecclesiastics and laymen, that he brought by such means as these from vice to virtue, from hell to heaven, is almost beyond belief.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEQUEL OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER, IN WHICH IS SHOWN THE NUMBER OF CONVERSIONS HE OBTAINED BY THE SEVERE DISCIPLINES HE USED.

AS it is usual for most men to form their judgment of things, not as they are in reality, but acccording to their individual bias and disposition, I will here relate some instances to prove, that what has been already said of the piety of St. Thomas of Villanova, did not proceed from pusillanimity or deficiency of zeal for the glory of God and the maintenance of the archiepiscopal rights.

A canon of his cathedral having been arrested by the governor of Valentia, John de Villeraze, for having seriously hurt one of his officers, the chapter, who were greatly concerned at this, exerted themselves to the utmost to obtain his release. But finding their efforts useless, they had recourse to the archbishop, imploring him to spare them this ignominy, and to exert his authority in behalf of their brother. He replied that he was deeply grieved at this accident, and wished it were in his power to act, and to spare their companion such a disgrace, but

that his hands were tied by the concordat they had made on his arrival; so that it was useless for them to call upon him to protect a person who was exempted, by their privileges, from his jurisdiction.

This answer afflicted them to the last degree, and fearing that whilst they were losing time in soliciting one and another for the criminal, justice might proceed to his condemnation by a definitive sentence, they offered to submit themselves to the archbishop's jurisdiction during his life, and passed a public act to that effect. In consequence of which the Saint sent immediately to inform the prisoner, and began to proceed by the way of ecclesiastical censures against the governor, and continued with the greater firmness on account of a black and most unworthy action committed soon after by the same man against a subdeacon. This young ecclesiastic having unfortunately killed a man in the bull-fights, which were the usual diversions in Spain at the time of the Carnival, he dragged him to prison, and there, without any judicial process, caused him to be strangled and his body cast into the town with the cord still around his neck, every one trembling with horror and dismay at the sight of so barbarous a spectacle.

The generous archbishop finding that after two or three remonstrances, the governor still refused to give up his canon, cut him off with all his adherents from the communion of the faithful, by the greater excommunication, and at the same time caused an interdict to be published throughout the city, where the churches were closed and the divine offices ceased, according to the usual practice on such occasions in Spain, and sometimes in cases of less importance. The interdiction lasted several months, notwithstanding all the viceroy's efforts to oblige the archbishop to raise it. To his entreaties he joined threats of seizing the temporals of his church, and employed all his power against him, that what he would not grant by fair means he might be compelled to do by force. The Saint, firm as a rock, sent this answer to the viceroy's menaces: "To be faithful to your king, your excellence is obliged to maintain his authority by every just and reasonable means against those who would weaken it. In like manner, seeing the wrong done to the Church, it is my duty to defend it with the arms that God has placed in my hands, unless I would wish to pass for, and to be, a cowardly and mercenary pastor. And as to the revenues of the

archbishopric that you threaten to seize, I shall not be the loser by your performing your threat, but the poor, to whom they belong. And I ask for nothing better, than to be discharged from the burden of the prelacy, to return to the life of a simple religious in his cell. And finally, I should esteem myself happy, not only to lose my property but my life, in protecting the Church that God has given me." At length the viceroy, judging by these concluding words, animated by an ardent and apostolic zeal, that the holy prelate would relax nothing of his resolution, and considering also that he was in the right, sent orders to the governor that he was to submit to his pastor. The canon was released on the Saturday before Palm Sunday; the governor acknowledged his fault, and humbly received and performed his penance. The third day after Easter, the archbishop from the pulpit explained to the people what had passed, protesting that it was not without much grief on his part that the interdict had lasted so long; but that he could not raise it whilst the honor of the church was concerned. With respect to their governor, who had been the cause of this disorder, he told them he was not the less Christian or Catholic for having thus

resisted the ecclesiastical censures, seeing he had thought he could do so lawfully; added to which, he had obeyed the viceroy, and humbly submitted himself to the Church.

But the holy archbishop never employed these violent remedies except in extreme cases. He loved rather to shed his tears and his blood before God for the salvation of the souls committed to him, and to punish himself for the sins of his flock by severe disciplines, than by exerting his authority to force them to their duty by means which would cost him less, if he had chosen to avail himself of the power of his office. His charity had ample room to exercise itself, for libertinism and dissoluteness of manners had in his time arrived almost at their utmost height in the greater number of those who were consecrated to God. Having been informed that a certain ecclesiastic, whom he had several times reproved for his bad conduct, still continued to scandalize the world by his immoralities, he sent for him to his house; and taking him privately into his oratory, he laid before him, in a forcible manner, the miserable state in which he lived, and the pernicious example his depraved morals gave to every one; showing him at the same time the punishment which his

crimes deserved. "However," said he, "as it is perhaps my clemency which has fomented your debauchery, and as it seems to me you have continued your disorderly life only because I have delayed to punish you, I resolve to bear the penalty myself." So saying, he prostrated himself before a crucifix, and began severely to discipline his body, which he had half uncovered, and continued this rigor until the guilty man could no longer suffer the remorse of his conscience, and terrified at seeing this proof of the excessive charity of his good prelate, threw himself at his feet, saying, "My Lord, cease, in the name of God. Give me that discipline, I beseech you, that I may expiate my sins by my own blood, not by the effusion of yours. Why should the innocent suffer for the guilty? No, I promise you, in the presence of this adorable crucifix, so entirely to change my life and manners, that for the future you shall be perfectly satisfied with me. And for what is past, I ask no favor from your goodness. Treat me according to the most rigorous justice. Impose on me what penance you shall think proper, for there is nothing that I will not do, by the grace of God, to satisfy Him for my offences." The Saint embraced him tenderly, and praised God in his heart

for the impression he had just made upon this poor miserable man. To fortify him in his pious resolution, he made him an exhortation so affectionate and so full of the Spirit of God, that he went from his presence, his eyes bathed in tears, and for six months remained struck with astonishment, and unable to recover the natural expression of his countenance. The rest of his days were passed in the service of God and His church in a most exemplary holiness of life.

The Saint met with many other similar occasions, where, in order to succeed and obtain the object of his desire, the conversion of souls, he spared nothing. He never esteemed his money better or more usefully employed than when given as alms to poor ecclesiastics, to support them respectably according to their condition. At one time having met with one whose guilt was caused by his poverty, he inflicted upon himself as severe a penance as if the fault had been his own. After several useless remonstrances he caused him to be arrested; but scarcely had he been eight days in prison, when, regarding him with the eye of charity, which suffers more in punishing than he does who receives the punishment, he released him, and summoning him into his oratory, said to

him, "Come here, my friend. Many a time have I entreated you to renounce your bad habits; tell me what are the ties which bind you so obstinately to sin. Open your heart to me, I conjure you in the name of God. Imagine that you are not before your archbishop, but that you are speaking to your dearest friend, for in truth I assure you, that after God, there is nobody in the world who loves you better, or who more ardently desires the salvation of your soul, than myself." The poor priest, touched by these expressions of burning love and charity, humbly confessed his crime, the time of committing it, and the cause which kept him engaged in it, which was poverty. At the word poverty, the good prelate groaned as if his heart was being torn from his body. "Is it possible," said he, turning to the crucifix, "O King of Glory, that from being poor it can be said that one of my sheep has offended you? It is, then, my fault, not his. For this reason, my Lord and my God, I conjure you, by the blood that you have shed upon the cross for him, that you will show him mercy. Open his eyes, make him see his deplorable state, that he may renounce it and detest it, and that he may return to Thee. As to myself, I will take the punish-

ment which is due for his sins, since it is I who am the cause of them." Then addressing the unhappy man, he said, "Return to your house, receive nothing whatever from the person you know of; I will provide for you. Recite your office devoutly, recommend yourself fervently to our blessed Lord, and return here to-morrow. But as this satisfaction is nothing to the punishment you deserve, take great care that you do not fail in a single point of what I have commanded." St. Thomas passed the night groaning and praying in his oratory for the conversion of this sinner, mingling his tears with the blood that he drew from his body by a very severe discipline. The next day the priest arrived at the appointed hour. St. Thomas again took him in private, and discoursed to him with the same fervor and zeal as the preceding day; and although he was the sworn enemy of ostentation, and never spoke willingly of his private exercises and devotions, yet he judged it expedient to do so on this occasion, in order to touch the feelings of this poor man, and make him enter into himself. He discovered to him then a part of his chest and shoulders wounded and bloody. "See, my brother," said he, "see the marks of the penance I have done for your sins.

Be assured that if you are so unhappy as to return to them, despising the mercy I have shown you, that God who is just will deprive you of His, and will cut you off as a dry and useless tree to serve as fuel for the eternal fires." These words filled the soul of the guilty man with so much terror and confusion, that, humbled to the dust, he approached to kiss those wounds, promising an amendment of life so solid and so exemplary, that he should for the future have only reason to commend. "Ah well," said the Saint, "remain firm in these resolutions, examine your past life, and make a good general confession. As to your future maintenance, give yourself no concern about it, I will allow you three crowns a month, and what is necessary for your daily support. See if it is enough." For several years this alms was continued to the poor ecclesiastic, until, finding himself able to live respectably according to his state of life, he declined receiving it any longer, feeling it was doing an injury to the poor, as it was depriving them of what was their property.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE CARE WHICH HE TOOK OF THE HONOR OF HIS CLERGY, AND OF HIS CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR.

AS it is the property of true charity to distinguish between sin and the sinner, in such a manner as to hate the one and love the other, so also superiors who possess that divine virtue are accustomed to correct those under their control in such a way, as while punishing their faults to preserve their honor and reputation.

This doctrine was common and familiar to our Saint in the pulpit, as may be seen in his Book of Sermons. But what he so well taught to others he practised still better himself. He endeavored to hide as much as possible the faults of his clergy, and to prevent any other than himself from discovering them. He kept a book in his cabinet in which he registered the names of his ecclesiastics and the crimes of which they were accused. When informations were brought, he copied them into this book, and then threw the originals into the fire. In drawing up the depositions against them, he never em-

ployed any officers but his own visitors, to whom he especially recommended secrecy, so jealous was he of the reputation of the clergy. He gave them in private the correction they deserved, and when he saw the amendment he so much desired, he effaced what he had written in his book, or tore out the leaf to obliterate all remembrance of it, and to prevent its being handed down to posterity. The extreme care that he took of their good name made him watch their conduct most carefully; though he did not place much reliance on the accounts brought him by laymen, his charity leading him to suppose that some of their complaints might proceed from interest or passion.

On one occasion the parishioners of Liria brought a charge against their curate. He listened to them patiently and heard out the accusation, and did not fail to inform the accused of what was said of him, warning him to take care of his conduct. In speaking of the affair to Dr. de la Porte, he told him he had great difficulty in believing the story, "Although," said he, "these people assure me that the fault of their pastor is notorious, and well known throughout the parish. Go you and visit this place; I will furnish you with authority to draw up the

informations; yet recommend the affair to our Lord, and beg of Him light to discover the true state of the case." The visit was made, and it was found that the good prelate was correct in his idea, and that their accusations were false and calumnious, with only a very trifling foundation even in appearance.

At another time he gave a very severe reprimand to one who brought a similar accusation. It was a charge against one of his brethren, made by a man, devout, retired from the world, and of irreproachable life. The Saint at first permitted him to speak, but the heat of his manner and his indiscreet zeal called for an interruption. "Gently, gently," said he, "dismiss all anger, and look a little into yourself. Remember that he of whom you are speaking is your brother, and as he is in the way of salvation, God can make him a Saint, notwithstanding his present weaknesses. You may fall into the same fault, or you may perhaps fall into a worse one. But supposing that you remain upright, tell me to whom are you indebted for it, if not to the pure mercy of God? Was it necessary for you to come here to discharge your spleen at the expense of your neighbor? Ought you not rather, according to the precept of the gospel, to have warned him of his

defects in private, before making them known?" After this charitable advice, with which he dismissed the accuser, he sent for the accused and talked to him in such a way, that of these two ecclesiastics whom he found faulty, each in a different manner, he made the one more holy, and the other more wise and cautious.

When he wanted to send for any one to give him advice or correction, he ordered the messenger to walk two or three hundred steps before or behind the party summoned, for fear that suspicions to his prejudice might be excited if he were seen going to the archbishop so attended.

So great was his compassion towards those whom he was compelled to place under restraint, that no sooner were they in prison, than it was the first desire of his heart to release them. All that he required was, that some one should petition for them, and that there should be some slight sign of amendment.

Having once confined one of his clergy whom he had often reprimanded without effect, he was much grieved to find that after some time had passed no one appeared to speak in his favor. His charity induced him to seek for intercessors to plead in his be-

half. "It seems," said he to Dr. de la Porte, "that this poor priest has no other friend than myself. Find some one, I entreat you, to speak to me in his favor. Perhaps he will correct himself after my remonstrances and all that he has suffered." It was done as he requested. The priest was brought into his presence, and his pardon begged of the archbishop, who granted it after a little delay, upon the promise that he made amendment of life for the future.

This was his ordinary practice on such occasions, and where necessity required it he often added liberality to their deliverance. He was once so touched with compassion at the sight of one who was miserably clothed, that he sent him a cassock and cloak by a secret messenger. He took especial care that his prisoners, whether clerks or laics, should be liberally supplied with whatever was necessary for their support. And as his object was to gain their souls, not their money, he would never hear, under any pretext, however specious, of a pecuniary compensation for their deliverance. In one single instance he changed the punishment of imprisonment for that of a fine of ten crowns, to be paid to the great hospital, in the case of a priest who was very rich and avaricious,

because he knew it would be touching him in the tenderest point, and the most likely to teach him wisdom. But this example was the only one of its kind. To the remonstrances of those who urged that this commutation of one punishment for another was very usual in other dioceses, he answered, "I know it well, nor do I wish to condemn the usage; but we judges and ecclesiastical superiors ought to make our inferiors understand and feel that their salvation is the object of our desire, not their purses."

The gaoler once complained to him, that instead of gaining anything in his service, he incurred some expense in the exercise of his duty, from the number and poverty of his prisoners. Upon his simple word the good prelate paid him whatever he said he had expended from his own resources, and promised that henceforth he would always do the same. The compassion he felt for these unhappy men induced him often to bestow very large sums on the officers of justice over and above their wages, as well to make them kind and gentle towards the criminals, as to prevent them exacting any money from them. His domestics were treated in the same liberal way. He regularly gave them each ten crowns at Easter,

as a gift, in acknowledgment of their services, besides what he always paid them for extraordinary journeys. If they fell into misfortune or disgrace, he endeavored to extricate them from their difficulties, and provided them with whatever help they required.

A man named James Civra, whom he had sent to Enguera, having fallen ill, he charged the physicians and surgeons to attend him assiduously, and at the same time sent him ten crowns by his almoner, and three days afterwards nine more, with all the nourishment that both he and his family could want, and in the course of a few days visited him himself, to console him and to bestow him additional relief, telling him to be quite easy, for he should be supported until his perfect recovery. Don Francis of Navarre, his immediate successor in the archbishopric of Valentia, said, when he considered his charity and his other heroic virtues, "Where is the man who can attain to the height of this giant?"

CHAPTER X.

THE VIGILANCE AND PRUDENCE OF THIS HOLY PASTOR IN THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS FLOCK.

OF the various qualities springing from the love which the good pastor feels for his flock, there are two, highly useful and necessary to prelates, and indeed, to all superiors who desire to acquit themselves worthily of their duties. The first is vigilance, which demands their utmost care and labor to be used for the spiritual good of those they govern, and an incessant unwearied watching for their salvation, with a willingness to sacrifice even health and life if necessary to obtain this object. The second is prudence and Christian discretion in selecting the most proper opportunities and convenient seasons for setting about any work with a good hope of success.

St. Thomas of Villanova, whom the providence of God had raised to the episcopate to enlighten the Church, and to be an example to the prelates of his own time, as well as to all future ages, possessed these two virtues in a preëminent degree. The

greatness of his obligations dwelt perpetually on his mind, and the thought of his responsibility kept him constantly in exercise and actively engaged in doing good, knowing on one hand the power and stratagems of that roaring lion who seeks to make his prey of the wandering sheep, and on the other how weak and helpless the sheep are to resist so powerful an enemy, unless protected and defended by the shepherd of the flock. For this reason he neglected no means for keeping those entrusted to his care in safety; he endeavored to know the defects of all, and each in particular, that he might be the better able to assist them and ward off the assaults of the enemy. It has been already related that he kept an account of all his clergy; in the same way he had a book for lay persons, in which he wrote with his own hand the names of the debauchees, concubines, gamesters, married men who lived separated from their wives, and in short of all those generally who were leading publicly scandalous lives, that he might reprove them privately, and exhort them to return to their duty, as his prudence and charity dictated. Sometimes he sent for one, sometimes for another, but always separately, and addressed all according to the mind and con-

dition of each. His first remonstrances were always those of a father and true pastor, and if they made no impression, he used his authority as judge, which Spain at that time (and even now in certain cases) gave her prelates to punish the obstinately guilty.

Instead of excommunication and the censures of the church, which he never employed but with extreme pain, he either imprisoned the offender, or punished him by some pecuniary fine, which he always applied to the relief of the poor, though, as already mentioned, he was a great enemy to this latter mode of punishment. If in spite of all his endeavors he met with any one over whom neither gentleness, threats, nor even imprisonment had any influence, as a final remedy he had recourse to the power of the viceroy, who punished his hardness of heart by exile, hunting him out of the kingdom. The good prelate hoped that the fear and shame attending such a chastisement might perhaps lead to amendment; and where it failed to produce the desired effect, he consoled himself by the thought, that being cut off from his flock, the contagion of his bad example would no longer infect the rest of the sheep.

One great cause of regret with St. Thomas

was the utter impossibility of his becoming acquainted with all those who lived under his jurisdiction; his diocese being unusually large and extensive. It was on this account that he endeavored to obtain the division of the archbishopric, and of the one diocese to make two. He wrote to the emperor, representing to him that the state of Valentia was quite sufficient for the archbishopric, and the mountainous country with that of Xativa would very reasonably constitute a bishopric. That for his part he was ready to renounce his rights and his revenues in proportion as his charge should be lessened, and that if it pleased his imperial Majesty he would himself write to the pope explaining his views, that the more bishops there were and the fewer souls they have to govern, the more easily will they know them, and as our Lord says, "call them by their name," that they may serve, assist, and watch over them.

He was much interested in persuading married persons to live together in peace and concord. If he heard of an instance where this harmony did not exist, he spoke to the husband and wife separately, exhorting them to unity of heart, and afterwards did the same in presence of them both. And from knowing their reciprocal com-

plaints and griefs, he contrived so well and spoke so judiciously, that he often renewed their affection, and left them with the resolution of performing their duties to each other. In cases where the rich were concerned, he added to remonstrances, warnings of the indignation of God and of the ruin of their family. If they were poor, and sinned through ignorance, he charitably instructed them in their duty, and if he perceived that poverty was the cause of their estrangement from each other, he easily applied a remedy by his charity.

The burning desire he felt for the conversion of the Moors in the kingdom of Valentia, continually occupied his mind, and left him no repose. Not being able to achieve this great work, he had several times endeavored to be relieved from his responsibility as archbishop; and when he found that the powers on whom he depended would not consent to it, he wrote to the emperor, begging that he would be pleased to assign a certain sum sufficient to maintain some pious and learned curates, who might also be full of zeal to labor in this ungrateful soil. From the motions of this same charity, he founded a college for newly converted children, with ten thousand crowns of rent, which, with the

permission of the pope and emperor, he alienated from the revenues of the archbishopric; beseeching them at the same time to see fit to increase this foundation from the same source, according as in the course of time their numbers increased.

Before Lent he was accustomed to assemble all his preachers, and exhort them to labor diligently during that holy season, explaining to them what kind of sins were the most common and the most requiring attack. He entreated them ever to recollect, that their object in ascending the pulpit should not be to preach up themselves; nor their design to gain reputation by the exhibition of their knowledge or eloquence; but the grand desire of their hearts should be to attack and destroy vice, and to found and establish in its place the empire of Jesus Christ.

Those who were confessors, he also prepared for this season of penitence, and the harvest of souls, by prescribing certain rules in the form of familiar instructions. Such as, that they should feel no astonishment or surprise when they found grievous sinners at their feet, still less should they repulse them by indiscreet zeal; but on the contrary, they should receive them warmly, and listen to

them charitably. At the same time he gave them this caution, that if any one appeared so hard and indifferent as almost to freeze them with his coldness, he must not be absolved, but some honest and legitimate excuse for dismissing him sought for, with the advice to retire for some days from the world, and petition for the grace of God to discover the heinousness of sin, and to feel the necessary sorrow and compunction for having committed it. "And," he would say, "with regard to yourselves, be sure always to implore the mercy of our Lord in their behalf, in your prayers and sacrifices, and you will see that His Divine Goodness will by this means bless your undertakings. This is what, I assure you, I practise myself, and I find the benefit of so doing." A striking testimony of the value which the Saint set upon the soul and its salvation, and an illustrious proof of his prudence and charity in conducting and assisting them in the ways of God.

There were certain maxims and principles of prudence from which he never departed, some of which I will mention. That it was requisite to teach and explain to all whatever was necessary to be followed or avoided; carefully to seek the most suitable means

for arriving at the end proposed; to make use of the laws, and to apply universal rules to particular cases, conformably to the times and the necessities of each person. These, and such as these, were his favorite maxims.

He was never deterred from any undertaking by rumors or reports. He listened patiently to tedious narrations, that he might be enabled to form a more mature and weighty judgment. He never engaged in a certain evil under the appearance of good. By a wise and holy condescension he accommodated himself to the young, the ignorant and the weak; and, like another Elijah, he used every means for the good of his fellow-men. However inconsiderable the affair might be, he never resolved upon anything suddenly, but took time to consider, saying usually, "We shall say mass to-morrow, and we will pray God to inspire us with what He will have us to do." It was very difficult to make him believe the failings of any one, unless he heard it from persons of authority and gravity. He suspended his judgment until he was certain of the thing from the mouth of the accused himself, or by the depositions of several who were ocular witnesses of the fact. He generally attributed to passion or surprise what he heard of

others, unless he had the clearest proof to the contrary. To yield his rights, when by doing so he could avoid contention and deprive the world of a subject of animadversion, was never a difficulty with him. For the sake of peace he often dissembled his feelings, and appeared not to notice things which other persons beneath him in station would have laid hold of in order to resent. He made as few new ordinances as possible, saying, that to publish orders, to multiply commands, and to add to censures, except from absolute necessity, was nothing short of exciting opposition, and giving occasion for men to offend God more grievously, since he who fears not to commit a mortal sin, will scarcely care for censures.

Having found on his arrival in Valentia that a great number of the inhabitants kept mistresses, he severely rebuked them in his sermons, and endeavored by every means in his power to reform them; but not seeing the amendment he wished, he threatened them from the pulpit, and told them publicly, that if they once by their incorrigibility obliged him to have recourse to censures and excommunication, he would act against all and each in particular with the utmost rigor and severity. Some time after this

he caused his mandate to be posted up, and the nature of the punishments he was ready to denounce against the guilty. This mandate caused much dismay and excitement throughout the city, and induced several of the principal inhabitants to go to the archbishop, beseeching him not to proceed to extremities; endeavoring to persuade him that though his intention was praiseworthy in itself, yet these were not times to exercise his authority without doing much evil and very little good. He replied, that since neither his entreaties nor threats would lead them to amendment, he was resolved to employ his last remedy; adding, that with regard to the evil they foresaw would happen to several, it would be their own fault, not his; that in this affair he acted from a sense of duty, his object being to produce a reformation in any way that he could. He wished also to show to all the world that he was not one to flatter men in their vices through servile fear, since he was determined to do whatever lay in his power to punish them and oppose himself to their scandalous conduct. In this resolution he showed so much firmness that the offenders were terrified, and the greater part, though probably against their will, returned

to their duty and gave up those sinful connexions.

This procedure, which only deserved applause from its great success, failed not to meet with a censor to whom it gave offence. This was a certain doctor, who had wished that immediately after the noise of the thunder, the Saint had hurled the thunder-bolt upon the criminals, and could not refrain from openly blaming his wisdom, saying, that the archbishop and all his ministers had sinned mortally by their too great indulgence. The good prelate replied to him who brought an account of this, "Without doubt this theologian is a good man, but of the number of those fervent ones mentioned by St. Paul as possessing zeal without knowledge." He then ordered the canon, *Non potest, quæst.* 4, *caus.* 23, which is taken from the third chapter of the second book of St. Augustine, to be brought and read to him, where this holy Doctor expressly instructs prelates and all ecclesiastical superiors, that when they find that a vice is very deeply rooted it is better to have recourse to our Lord by prayers and tears, reproving the sinner in the spirit of love and charity, than to take the sword in hand and excite the passions of men by excommunications and cen-

sures. "Is that good man, who does not entertain these sentiments, aware," said he, "of the care and pains I have taken to correct those against whom his anger is directed? Have I not reproved and exhorted them several times, both in public and private, and mentioned them as incorrigible to the viceroy and governor of Valentia? Let him in short inquire whether St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, those two great lights of the Church, used anathemas and excommunication, to arrest the progress of drunkeness and swearing, which were so common among the people under their care? No: for they were too wise and too prudent. They did not think it right to exchange a little good for a great evil, nor inconsiderately to use their authority, and thus excite the aversion of those whose friendship they wished to obtain in order to influence them for their good."

The prudence of the Saint shone conspicuously in the invention of certain means, equally ingenious and innocent, that he sometimes used to draw persons of distinction from the habits of sin, when neither his sermons nor private admonitions had been able to arouse them to a sense of their duty.

For a long time he had, with the utmost solicitude, endeavored to procure an amend-

ment of life in one of his canons, without making the least impression on his mind. He resolved to gain his friendship, whatever it might cost him; for which purpose he dismissed the subject of his past life, and for two years continued to show him every imaginable kindness and favor, until he thought he had not a greater friend in the world. Seeing he had gained his affection, he chose his time and said to him one day, "I am convinced of your good will towards me, and that you would feel gratified in doing me a service; is it not so?" The canon assured him of his friendship, and protested that there was nothing, however difficult it might be, that he would not undertake with the object of pleasing him, if he would do him the honor to confide in him. "I believe you," replied the Saint. "I have an affair at Rome which requires an intelligent man like yourself to manage it, to obtain a happy result. Will you take charge of it, and make this journey for me? For I know not any one into whose hands I can entrust my interests more securely than in yours." The truth was, he was in want of some one near the pope to solicit a brief, without which he was unable to surmount some great difficulties that were raised to prevent the reforma-

tion of certain religious, whom he wished to reduce to inclosure. At first the canon was very much surprised and astonished, yet not being able to find any plausible excuse, he made, as is said, a virtue of necessity, and replied, that he was ready to execute what he should be pleased to command. "Now then," said the prelate, "return to your residence, take leave of your friends, and settle your affairs as if you were never to return from this journey, because in reality it is long and dangerous." After finding these orders had been obeyed, he said, "Come this evening to my house, and we will sup together. You shall sleep there also, and to-morrow morning early I will set you on your way. You need not bring any servant; I will give you one of mine, who shall accompany you, and who will serve you better than any of your own." But the good prelate, who was more anxious for the eternal interests of the canon than for his affair at Rome, having taken leave of him in his chamber, instead of retiring to his own, went into his oratory, where he passed the night praying and weeping at the foot of a crucifix. A little before day he returned to his guest's room, saying, "My friend, you have omitted to do something of consequence. You have settled

your house and affairs, you have even assured me that you have made your will as if on the point of death; but as far as I can judge, the principal thing yet remains to be done, which is, to set your conscience in order, imploring assistance from on high by a good confession and communion, for the happy termination of so long and perilous a journey. On this account, as my business at Rome is not urgent, your departure can be delayed a month. I have thought of a project which may not perhaps be disagreeable to you, which is, that since you cannot return to your own house, nor make your appearance in the city, without creating inquiry, you should remain quietly here. Nobody but myself and the single servant who will attend upon you in your chamber will know anything of it. Every one will think you are set out on your journey. You can employ yourself in making an examination of your conscience, that you may afterwards confess to whomsoever you shall select. We will send for the priest you shall choose, to receive your confession without letting him know who you are; after which I will communicate you in the chapel, and you shall then depart with the blessing of our Lord, which it ought to be our object to obtain upon every undertaking."

The canon listened to the archbishop as if God Himself had spoken to him, and acquiesced in all that he proposed. At the end of a month his confessor persuaded him to ask for a further delay, telling him it would be much to his spiritual advantage to remain in seclusion for another month, perfectly to accomplish that work which our Lord had begun in his soul. He willingly complied with his advice, his heart being already so touched that he was quite another man. The Saint granted his request with joy, well knowing how useful and indeed necessary it was for his establishment in good. Two months having thus passed away, the journey was still delayed, the expected letters from Rome, without which he could not proceed, not having yet arrived. As it was God Himself who by a special providence conducted the affair for the good of the soul of this devout recluse, He inspired him with a willingness to remain in retirement, as the good prelate wished, till the letters arrived from Rome, which he really believed could not be much longer delayed. He continued six months occupied in the holy and salutary exercises of penitence without feeling the least weariness, so delightful had solitude become to him. At length, at the end of that period,

the brief arrived. The good prelate showing it to his devout penitent, said, "See, the brief itself is come instead of the letters I expected, so that it will not be necessary for you to undertake the fatigue of this journey. Nevertheless, I feel as much indebted to you as if you had actually performed it, and will endeavor to recompense you on every occasion I may meet with, of testifying my friendship for you. This evening the news of your arrival will be spread abroad, and to-morrow morning you can return to your house." His conversion was complete, and the change in his life and manners astonished all those of Valentia who had known him before, seeing the grace of God superabound where sin had before abounded. This was a singular proof of the Saint's care and love for the souls under his charge, and of the admirable prudence with which he treated them in order to obtain their salvation.

By this same spirit of prudence he knew how to accommodate himself to simple and sincere persons, charitably bearing with their ignorance when it proceeded from zeal and piety, however great and extraordinary their mistakes might be. On one occasion several villagers of Mislara, in the diocese of Valentia, seeing the air thickened and covered

with clouds, which threatened a sudden and horrible tempest, the thunder beginning to roll on all sides, whilst the continual lightning made the heavens appear to be on fire, ran into the church to entreat the curate to present himself at the door of the church with the Cross or the Blessed Sacrament, in order that it might please God to avert the threatened danger. Not finding the priest there, a good old man amongst them clothed himself in a cassock, and with a napkin proceeded to take the ciborium where was the Blessed Sacrament, and to carry it to the lower end of the church, followed by other peasants, with a wax candle in his hand, to implore the Divine mercy with much faith and devotion. This action was in itself rash, and deserved to be punished in the person of the old man, who made the sign of the cross and gave the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which he held in his hands. Nevertheless our Lord, by the virtue of His Divine presence, granted to the faith and piety of these poor people an answer to their petition, visibly dispersing the storm which they dreaded, without its touching their territory. This fact being related to the archbishop, he sent for the good old man who had taken the prominent part in the affair. He praised

his faith and zeal, but reproved him for his too little reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, and made him fully understand his fault; and to expiate it, knowing he had some little property, he ordered him for a year to carry two white wax candles to the church, and to cause them to be lighted before the Blessed Sacrament every Sunday and festival during mass, until the post-communion.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE WONDERFUL CHARITY OF ST. THOMAS TOWARDS THE POOR.

THOSE who know what Saint Thomas thought concerning the obligation of all bishops and ecclesiastical superiors to liberality in alms-giving, and who have heard the reason why he was called the father and great almoner of the poor, will have no difficulty in believing what is recorded of his extreme munificence towards them. He loved them so tenderly, and was always so much disposed to do them good, that not content with giving them what he

could spare, he often deprived himself of the common necessaries of life to assist them in their distresses. On his arrival in Valentia, he obtained information through Dr. Misleguer, who came to welcome him, of the amount of the archiepiscopal revenues, and expressed dissatisfaction at finding that it was not more than eighteen thousand ducats. "I have been deceived," said he, "I was told it was worth more. But do not imagine that I complain on my own account, or that it is my own interests which I am considering when I speak in this manner, since a thousand ducats are more than sufficient to support me and my family. But I am sorry because of the number of poor, which is so great in this country; and from what you say, I shall not have enough to maintain them." After the general synod was concluded, which he had assembled for the spiritual good of his diocesans, he directed all his care and thoughts to the management and distribution of his temporalities, to be enabled to support the poor.

Of his eighteen thousand ducats he gave to them twelve thousand, including the thousand spent in the foundation of some chaplains in the cathedral, to increase the number of those who assisted at the night office, and

the two thousand that went to the college and rectories he had likewise founded for the new converts. With the remaining six thousand he paid a pension of two thousand to Don George of Austria, his predecessor; and the other four were employed in his household expenses, and paying the officers of justice, as procurers, advocates, and others.

Every day there was cooked in his house a large caldron of meat or fish, according to the season, which was given to poor travellers who were in want. Moreover, to others who generally came about noon, there was a regular distribution of soup, bread, and a cup of wine, with the addition of money to those that were maimed or sick. The poor who came there daily were from four to five hundred, and sometimes more, so that although the court was large and spacious, they were sometimes obliged, as one may say, to make a second table. The charity of those who received them did not deprive of their portions those who did not come in proper time; they were welcome at all hours, because the Saint had expressly commanded that no one should go from his house unrelieved; but at the same time he directed they should be warned that henceforth they should be more punctual to the hours assigned.

He never relaxed his liberality, though he was constantly told that a number of these poor people were idle vagabonds, who abused his goodness, and who laughed at his servants after having deceived them by obtaining two alms instead of one. "If," said the Saint, "there are here vagabonds and idle people, it is for the governor and the judge of police to look to them; that is their duty; mine is no other than to assist and relieve those who come to my door. God in His mercy preserve us from ever refusing an alms to the poor! What matters it if they do deceive us and laugh at us, provided, that we relieve them in sincerity of heart, and in the name of Him, who to enrich us was willing to live and die poor?" As he one day looked from his hall into the court, where alms were being then distributed, he perceived a poor man, after having received his portion, pass over to the side where those were standing who had not yet been served. Nevertheless, he did not perform this feat so skilfully but that one of the servants detected him, and loaded him with reproaches. The man maintained that he had received nothing, and proceeded to utter complaints and invectives. The good archbishop, who knew the truth, sent to tell the servant to be silent,

and to satisfy the poor man, and also desired to know the reason of the uproar. "My lord," said the servant, "it is because I know well that this man has already been relieved, and I assure you they endeavor to impose on us as much as they can." "What," said the Saint, "do you call it imposing on you to receive two alms? I see well that you do not know what it is to be poor; henceforth dispute no more with them; suffer them to impose on you; may it not be that you are yourself imposed on, and that this poor man, whom you call a deceiver, may be an angel that God sends you, to try your charity and patience."

Amongst those poor whom shame prevented from discovering their distress, he caused two hundred ducats to be distributed by his almoners every three months, according to the necessities of each, besides what he gave with his own hands by the help of the list which he had of all the necessitous persons of every parish. He so arranged it that those of one parish came to him one week, and those of another, another; so that he was able to see them all himself, and give them relief every three months; no day in the week passing in which he did not in this manner see and relieve more than fifteen or

twenty persons. He also assisted poor gentlemen who were in difficulties, as well as ladies, young and old, and persons who had formerly lived in prosperity; giving them such liberal assistance as to enable them to live comfortably; assigning to this duty the first day of every month. Sometimes they came to him, as persons unknown, in his chapel, and secretly received his help.

With regard to certain persons whose quality would not allow them to come to his house, he employed priests or religious, in whom he knew he could confide, to discharge so delicate an office. By these means, and others like them, which his charity invented, he supported a number of noblemen and widows of rank, with so much prudence and compassion, that they lived on his charity without injuring their reputation or that of their families. And if they had daughters to marry, he increased his liberality in proportion, in order that by increasing their dowry, they might make suitable matches. But what was particularly to be admired, was the way in which he contrived to help those, ladies especially, who endured great misery without having the courage to disclose it, nor to ask or receive alms. He endeavored to learn who were their confessors, then sent

for them, and promising secrecy, exacted the same from them, and then learning exactly what were the distresses of their penitents, he remitted to them a sum of money, strictly forbidding the priest to mention the name of their benefactor, and only to say that it was from one who owed them a certain sum, but who not having the means to pay it all at once, would do so from time, if he might be allowed to thus discharge his debt. The Saint spoke truly, since, according to his own doctrine, bishops make no alms to the poor, properly speaking, as they are obliged to give them what is justly their due.

Ingenuity in devising means of doing good is the property of true charity when arrived at perfection. No one, therefore, will feel surprise that our Saint, who possessed this virtue in so eminent a degree, should employ so many pious devices, and use them so skilfully, in his endeavors to benefit the whole world. The employment of his own possessions for the good of the poor did not content him, but as if his whole heart and thoughts were fixed on this one object, he wished that others also should do the same; and when any visited him, he endeavored to lead them to the like feelings of compassion and interest. A citizen of Valentia, named

Louis Camarene, a charitable and devout man, never came to see him without his inquiring after the poor of his parish, and all his discourse with him tended to recommend them to his care, and to induce him to do all in his power to increase the alms that had been left by the faithful for their subsistence. On one occasion he gave him advice worthy of his prudence and charity. "I assure you," said he, "that I feel much friendship for you, because I see you have so much compassion for the poor. For this reason, believe me, I counsel you as your friend, to dispose of all your property in favor of the poor; and to do for them in your lifetime all that you had intended to do after your death; because God, who can touch the hearts of the rich at all times and in all places, to supply the wants of the poor, will not demand from you an account of those who are to come, but you will be responsible for those you see now before you in distress, and neglect to relieve them when you have the power of doing so."

With the same zeal and charity he provided for the sick, poor girls, and little children. When it was known that he took charge of foundlings, nursing them, and bringing them up at his own expense, there

were often three or four of them laid at his door during the night; so that sometimes he had as many as sixty, seventy, or eighty under his care. He was neither displeased nor astonished at this, nor did he consider it any liberty that they should thus bring them to their archbishop. On the contrary, considering the innocence of these little creatures, and not the guilt of their parents, he received them with joy and delight, following the example of our Lord.

Two of his servants once detected a man in the act of leaving his child at the archbishop's garden gate. After some contention they allowed him to depart, and taking the child they brought it to the holy prelate who was then at supper. He received it into his arms with a cheerful and satisfied countenance, inquired if it had been baptized, and gave it his blessing when he found it had received holy baptism. Then the servants informed him that they had seized the father before taking charge of the child, and that they might have brought him there if they had wished. "You did wrong," said he, "to attack the father. What did you suppose I should do to him, if you had conducted him into my presence? Are not these poor people miserable enough in their

indigence, without afflicting them by unnecessary disgrace? Never let it occur again." Then giving the child to bishop Cevrian, who was at table with him, he begged him to find a nurse for it as soon as possible. "We have," said he, "forty-eight children to provide for, and now we shall have forty-nine; but if we have found means to feed and clothe forty-eight, we can surely do the same for forty-nine, and more still if it please God to send them to us. For I hold it as indubitable, that nothing will ever be wanting to us for the support of the poor." With the same goodness he made a point of seeing these children from time to time, and ordered their nurses to bring them to his house every first day of the month. And when they were arranged in the hall through which he passed to go to say mass, he stopped and looked at all the children one after another, making inquiries of their nurses as to their state of health, and what care they took of them. He reproved the negligent, and gave money above their wages to those whose children were cleaner and in better condition than the others, to induce them all, by the hope of reward, faithfully to perform their duties.

In the same manner he took charge of

poor orphans, who by the death of their parents were left without money or protection; and for this purpose he engaged a prudent and aged matron to bring them up with every possible care. A poor shoemaker and his wife having by their death left three little children entirely destitute, the Saint sent for them, and placed them with this good woman, recommending them especially to her tender solicitude. The love and affection he showed for these little innocents, so won upon their hearts, that as soon as they saw him they ran to him as they would have done to their own father, which child-like confidence continued till they arrived at a proper age, when he placed each of them with masters to learn some trade suitable to their birth. He also educated a great number of others, and his love for them all extended even beyond the grave; having said himself a short time before his death, that he had paid for the nurses and the other expenses of the children for three years after his death.

His almoner was strictly charged to provide the sick with whatever their several disorders required; to give them the best meat for soups, preserves, and in short, whatever was ordered by the physician whom he kept, together with a surgeon and apothecary

for the benefit of the poor. He always wished that something in particular should be added for those who were afflicted with incurable diseases, in order to console them and soften the bitterness of their sufferings.

The interest he took in young girls who were poor, made him extraordinarily liberal towards them, assisting them with the utmost judgment and charity. So much so, that it is said there was not a single marriage amongst the poor in Valentia while he was archbishop, to which he did not give his contribution according as he judged necessary. He had no fixed time or day to exercise this kind of charity. At whatever time they applied to him, his alms was always ready. One condition was, that they should be always accompanied by their mothers, that he might make himself acquainted with their circumstances; and he never dismissed them without giving them some pious instruction upon the duties of their state. He then assigned some future day for their return, making use of the interim to inform himself, by means of his almoner or other discreet persons, of the truth of what had been told him. If the account proved to be true, he gave them sufficient to enable them to marry, and if not, they received only his ordinary alms, as he

made it a rule that no necessitous person should ever leave his presence empty-handed. The money employed in this kind of charity amounted to a very considerable sum, there being no poor girls who had gained something in service to whose dowry he did not add twenty crowns; and as for those who had nothing, their parents having been obliged from some good reason to keep them at home, he gave them forty or fifty crowns, sometimes even seventy or eighty, according to their rank in life. There were generally five-and-twenty or thirty every year that he thus provided for. Those young girls who were commonly thought to be well off, but who in reality were not so, received more ample donations. To one he gave a hundred ducats, to others two or three, or even more, according to their state in life, interest never being requisite to obtain his help, still less that they should exaggerate their wants; for his hand was always open, and he was never better pleased than when he could anticipate their wants by his liberality. A young man upon the point of marrying, begged him to bestow twenty crowns upon him, to enable him to purchase some few articles of furniture; saying also, that the girl he was about to marry was as poor as himself. His re-

quest was immediately granted, and the Saint hearing he was by trade a carpenter, commanded his treasurer instead of twenty crowns to count out fifty, to give him the means of buying wood for his work. The young man, surprised at the excess of his goodness, threw himself at his feet to return his humble thanks; but the Saint raising him up, said, "My son, return thanks to God for this assistance; for what I have given you is from His property, not mine," and then dismissed him with his blessing. He exercised the same charity towards a poor girl without solicitation; adding thirty crowns to what he had before appointed for her, to enable her husband to buy materials to carry on his trade at the commencement of their housekeeping. The same often occurred in his liberalities to persons of quality, repeatedly adding a hundred crowns, as though he thought he had given too little; his unlimited charity always prompting him to do more and more.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTINUATION OF THE ACCOUNT OF HIS CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR.

THIS good prelate's compassion for the poor was so great, that not content with assisting them by his immense charities, he never felt greater joy than when an occasion offered of doing them good, nor did he ever feel wearied or importuned by the number or frequency of their requests. In the church of our Lady of Succors, there came one day a man, who, throwing himself upon his knees before the tomb of St. Thomas shortly after his death, began to sigh and shed tears abundantly. The sacristan having noticed his deep feeling, asked him after the conclusion of his prayer what was the cause of his grief. "Father," said the man, "do not be surprised at what you have seen. Two things have passed between this blessed one and myself, which I can never call to mind without feeling the same sorrow that I did on the day my good father died. The one of them was this. I owed a sum of money to a priest. For some time he

had patience with me, and upon my promising soon to discharge the debt, he refrained from arresting me. But at length, wearied with my frequent delays, he put an execution in my house, so that I was upon the point of losing all my furniture.

"Touched with compassion, one of my neighbors advised me to go and complain to the archbishop, assuring me that he was too good and merciful not to order the priest to give me a further respite. I thought I ought not to do this, having so long abused his patience; and it seemed to me to be quite just he should act as he had done, as I was in the wrong for having so often failed to keep my word.

"Nevertheless, my affairs were so urgent and my friends so pressing, one of them even offering to accompany me, that I consented to go. The good archbishop received us very affably, and inquired at once how he could serve us. I told him the state of my affairs, and that I owed the priest seven crowns. 'Seven crowns,' said he, 'it is a considerable sum for this priest to lose; no doubt he stands as much in need of it as you do.' Then calling his steward, he ordered him to give me seven crowns to pay my debt, saying to me, 'Go quickly and satisfy

your creditor, for from his acting in this manner, I judge that he suffers no less than yourself.' This was not all. After having received this gift from his hands, I fell into another difficulty, which obliged me again to have recourse to his charity, without which I should never have recovered. I was oppressed with debts on every side, and destitute of means to discharge them, unless I sold the house which I held of the archbishop. I was solicited by my creditors themselves, to demand of the archbishop some diminution of his right to the fine of alienation; but I had not the boldness to present myself before him, feeling it would be a kind of temerity to do so. However, my notary, who knew the Saint better than myself, managed so well that he took me there himself. He recognized me immediately, and spoke with so much familiarity and kindness that I opened my whole heart to him, explaining all my necessities and miseries, and asked pardon if I was so importunate as to beg him, after the favor he had shown me, to release me from a part of the fine of alienation that I owed him for my house; the extremity to which I was reduced constraining me to act in this manner. The word 'importunate' displeased him. 'My child,' said he, 'do not

speak thus. I look upon no one as importunate, whoever he may be, who comes to me in his hour of need. Do you not know that I am in this place for the very purpose of hearing your distresses, and of relieving them to the utmost of my power?' He then inquired what the fine of alienation was, and having learned, that if he withdrew his claims in my favor, the money would not fall into my hands, seeing it was a part of the price of my house, he refused my request and granted it in another manner. He caused what was due to him to be taken from his own funds and laid on the table, and then turning to the notary, asked him if this money did not belong to him, and if he could not dispose of it as he pleased. He was answered that he certainly could do so. 'Take it then,' said he to me; 'I give it to you. And you, notary, I declare in your presence that I give it to him, so that I intend he should not be deprived of it under any claim of debt whatever; for in that case I should only do the same again. Go, then, my child, make use of this little sum, and henceforth do not fear to be importunate, whenever you stand in need of my assistance.'" He did a charitable act of the same nature to a poor artisan, whom his creditors obliged to sell

his house. To prevent them reaping the benefit of his alms, he himself brought what was due to him in right of the fine of alienation, and freely giving it to him said, 'Take this, my friend, it is not mine, it belongs to the poor.'"

The sacristan of our Lady of Succors, Father John Rezier, one day found a certain woman praying before the tomb of the Saint, and seeing her weep so bitterly, asked her the reason of her tears and grief. "Father," said she, "it is not easy for those who knew the charity of this blessed archbishop, and who like myself have felt the effects of it, to behold his tomb with a dry eye. I will relate to you what some years before his death, a lady of rank in this city told me regarding him. She had disposed of all the best of her property in order to support herself, and in the last necessity to which she was reduced, without daring to discover it, she begged me, knowing I had the entry of the archbishop's house, to represent to him her extreme distress, and to beg him to have pity on her, without, however, mentioning in what way she wished to be assisted. I went to seek him, and mentioned to him the poverty of this poor lady. Immediately, without questioning me as to where and how I became

acquainted with her, or who she was, he gave me a very considerable sum for her use. 'Carry that to her now,' said he, 'and return to me whenever she wants the like assistance, without any fear of being troublesome to me. Tell her to love solitude, and to take great care to serve God, and as to myself, I promise you, I will not fail to help her according to the power that God gives me.'"

Time would fail me to relate innumerable other instances of the charity of this holy archbishop, who, besides his ordinary alms, was accustomed, like the patriarch Abraham, to stand at the entrance of his house, to invite passengers to enter, that he might exercise the virtue of hospitality. In going to and returning from mass it was his practice to remain for some time in his hall, to see and listen to the poor; the mercy he showed them at those hours making a part of his preparation and thanksgivings before and after the holy sacrifice.

This great servant of God and true father of the poor, often said that alms consisted less in giving, than in relieving those who were suffering; adding that the Christian who has the power of delivering his neighbor from unhappiness or misery of any kind, and forbears to do it, is unworthy of the name

of almoner. It was this principle which made him so often do more than he was asked, always presuming that he had not done enough.

Having heard that the widow of a poor artisan, who had several little children, had much difficulty in bringing them up, and endured many hardships, he allowed her a sum of money every month. But finding, in spite of this help, that she often experienced scarcity, he asked her if she was able to do anything to assist herself, and by that means support herself and her children more comfortably. She answered that she knew how to prepare peeled barley; upon which he ordered them to provide her with grain and whatever else was necessary for the employment, so that by means of her labor, and his continued assistance, she by degrees recovered from the pitiable state to which she had been reduced. Poor artisans were often indebted to him for buying them the tools and instruments necessary to carry on their trade; and sometimes he would add a sum of money to encourage them to proceed cheerfully in their labors.

A gentleman of Valentia, to whom the Saint allowed fifteen crowns a month for the support of his family, finding himself at one

time sadly pressed by some affair which had happened most inopportunely, thought of having recourse to his kind benefactor. But being in constant receipt of his bounty, he felt afraid and ashamed to go to him, but went in the night to one of his almoners, begging him to represent his distress to the good archbishop. He did so, and the Saint, far from being displeased at his request, was touched with compassion. "See," said he, "to what a pitch of distress this poor gentleman must have arrived, since in addition to the fifteen crowns he regularly receives, he comes at this time of the night to beg for more. Let him instantly have twenty crowns." Then a moment after, calling to his almoner, he said, "Count me out forty, for my heart tells me that it would not be for a trifling distress he would come here at such an hour. Endeavor to comfort him, and tell him from me to trust in God." It was not only this or that person who excited his pity or compassion, but as our heavenly Father makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, so did he in like manner bestow his alms upon people who deserved it for their virtues, and others also, who by their bad conduct were unworthy of it. He relieved these last from

the fear that by withholding his benefits they might become hardened in wickedness and rush forward to their eternal ruin.

One day he was informed that another gentleman to whom he gave fifteen crowns a month (which was his usual alms for nobles), made a bad use of it, and that instead of employing it in maintaining his household, he sometimes spent it in gaming. The archbishop was urged to withhold, or at least to retrench that liberality which was so much abused, to teach him wisdom for the future. "No, please God," replied the good prelate, "for if he does one wrong thing with the money I give him, he might perhaps do two if I took it away from him." However, though he defended the accused in his absence, he reproved him severely in private, threatening him to give him nothing more, if he did not change his life; and corrected him so judiciously that henceforth no one complained of his conduct.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEQUEL OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

I DOUBT not that what has been said above of the charities and bounties of St. Thomas of Villanova, will astonish those who regard them only with the eyes of the flesh, seeing that they greatly exceeded his revenues. Human prudence is not able to conceive how he who has but twenty thousand crowns can give away fifty and sixty thousand. But those who know the virtue of almsgiving, and how commonly our Blessed Lord multiplies alms in the hands of His almoners, enabling them with five loaves to feed thousands of persons, and who also know what the industry of a good father of a family can accomplish who does all he can to increase his store by good management, taking care that there are no superfluous expenses in his house, will not be astonished at those prodigies of charity which this blessed prelate performed by means of his holy and praiseworthy economy. Divine Providence, who had created him

for the poor, multiplied alms in his hands almost with a glance of his eye, whilst on his part he spared no trouble to make much of little, in order to assist them as much as possible. Meeting one day with his caterer, who had just bought him a lamprey, he stopped him and inquired what it had cost. "Forty pence," was the reply. "Forty pence!" exclaimed the Saint, "God would not be pleased at my eating what cost so much. What! a fish of forty pence to dine a religious! go, go, take it back immediately. The purveyor of some person of quality will be glad to have it at the price you have given for it." The man replied that he was the archbishop and not a religious, and that this fish was but a trifle for the dinner of an archbishop. "My friend," replied he, "it is true that I am the archbishop, but it does not please me to hear you say I am not a religious. Besides, how often have I told you and all those of my household, that we bishops are no less obliged to consider the interests of the poor in all we do, than are fathers of families obliged to consider those of their children.

At another time wishing to have an old habit repaired, he sent for a tailor, and asked him what would be the expense, as he wished

to make an agreement with him before his undertaking it. The tailor said he could make no charge for the work, as well from respect for the archbishop, as because of its trifling nature, but would leave it for the archbishop to give him what he thought proper. Upon being pressed to name a sum, he said, "My lord, you will then give me, if you please, so much." But the Saint, thinking he asked too much, made him agree to receive less, telling him he would pay what was reasonable, but no more. The tailor reluctantly acquiesced, and went away murmuring and scandalized, attributing the archbishop's carefulness to meanness and avarice. The good prelate clearly perceived his dissatisfaction, but took no notice of it, not being troubled at his rash judgment, his desire of sparing for the poor making him despise what any one could either say or think, provided there was no fault on his part, and that God might not be displeased with him. He always trusted that our Lord, who knew the purity of his intentions, which aimed only at his glory and the good of his neighbor, would know how to defend his cause in proper time and place against the censures of men, as he did truly in the case of this man. This tailor was a poor man,

who had three daughters, all marriageable, but who remained at home because he had not the means of giving them a marriage portion. The parish priest of St. Catherine, who knew their circumstances, advised him to go to the archbishop; and though he could not at first resolve to do so, looking upon him as an avaricious person, yet the priest at last persuaded him to go, and he ingenuously discovered to the kind prelate the miserable conjuncture in which he found his affairs. The Saint knew him at once, listened to him benignly, asked him his name and that of his daughters, and then took leave of him, charging him to return the next day, and to bring his confessor with him. "Go," said he, "and recommend yourself and your daughters to the protection of God, and beg of Him to be favorable to you." Having afterwards learned the truth from the confessor, whom he summoned immediately, to inquire about these poor girls, and the advantageous occasion which offered of settling them, "What dowry do you think they will require?" asked he. The priest having replied that he thought thirty crowns apiece would be quite sufficient, he willingly gave it them, and the tailor was to receive it the next day, and to return thanks for his

bounty. When he arrived, the Saint accosted him thus: "I promised your confessor yesterday to give each of your daughters thirty crowns, but as I have since thought it was too little, I will give them fifty, that they may have wherewith to buy furniture, and anything else they may want to begin housekeeping." The poor man was quite overcome by such great goodness and mercy, and threw himself upon his knees to kiss his benefactor's feet, weeping with mingled joy and confusion, but the servant of God raised him up, "Are you not," said he, "the tailor who mended my habit a short time since? yes, without doubt you are the man. I remember you were offended, and thought I dealt hardly with you; you ought not to have been displeased, because I did you no injury, and wished to pay the just value of your work, and if I was not disposed to pay you more, it was not covetousness which influenced me, since the only use I can make of money is to assist the poor, as you now experience in your own case." This charitable action the Saint desired to keep secret, but the gratitude of the poor tailor compelled him to publish it wherever he went, and to eulogize his great bounty and munificence.

I will relate another incident no less strik-

ing. A certain artisan with whom the archbishop was not agreed about the payment of some money, left his house very dissatisfied, and likewise suspected him of avarice. However, necessity obliged him shortly afterwards to have recourse to the good prelate, to obtain something for his daughter's marriage. The Saint granted him sixty crowns immediately; and when his steward, who was present, and who knew what had formerly passed between them, said to him, "My lord, some time ago you treated this man very differently to what you do now;" he said, "The expense I then incurred was for myself, and this is a matter of charity. Then it was my own property, or at least that which I am allowed for my own use, this is the money of the poor. As I ask for nothing but what is absolutely necessary for my support, you will not be surprised if I am so careful in what regards myself, and if my expenses go beyond what is simply necessary, that I am so distressed. But in what regards the poor, why should I grudge what is given to them? since it is their own that they receive, and I am obliged to assist them to the utmost of my power."

Some friends once persuaded him to make a lofty hall in his palace, telling him it would

be a very great convenience and would cost little. He consented; but finding it a work of time, and that the expense far exceeded what he had been given to understand, he grieved so much as to be almost inconsolable. One of his canons, named Ribeglies, wishing to speak to him on business, found him walking alone in the hall with the rosary in his hand and his face bathed in tears; and imagining that some misfortune had befallen him, begged to know what was the matter. "Have I not reason, Sir, to weep and mourn," replied he, "at having deprived the poor of so much money by this expense I have entered into? What can I say to my God when he calls me to an account for this?" This wonderful care of the poor was the cause of his wearing his clothes in so shabby a state, having them so often repieced, and frequently even repiecing them with his own hands. One of his vicars, named James Cevrian, having once found him in his chamber mending his stockings, was so surprised that he exclaimed, "My Lord, for eight or ten pence you might get this work done without giving yourself so much trouble." "My child, you know not what you say," replied he, "for I find the greatest consolation and joy in this occupation, considering that

these eight or ten pence which I save by this trifling work will be very useful to some poor man." Another time, as all the doors of his house were open during the day, there entered a poor man with the design of begging something to help him to marry his daughter, but having watched him from afar mending his clothes, he conceived a contempt for him; and thinking he was mistaken in his intention of applying to him for relief, he was about to return without a word, when the Saint, who had noticed him, called to him to inquire the object of his coming there, and why he was going away without speaking to any one. "Do not be afraid," said he, "to tell me boldly what it is which has discouraged you here." "My Lord," replied the man, "I have a daughter to marry, and I have nothing to give her, if your lordship does not take pity on her and me." "Then," replied the Saint, "you saw me mending my clothes, and you were going away without making your wishes known to me. This was not well. You must know that the very reason for my thus working with my own hands, is that I may save all that I can to give you, and all those who come to me in their sorrows as to their Father." After having, according to his usual custom, informed himself of the

character and circumstances of this poor man, he assisted him and his, as he had requested.

But to understand the pain and anxiety of mind he suffered when he had been induced to spend money upon any other object than the poor in his diocese, it will suffice to relate the motives which led him to found a college for a certain number of poor scholars in the university of Valentia. The affection he bore to the university of Alcala, joined to the desire he had of doing something for the good of the religious of his Order, induced him to begin building a college, of which he gave them the administration. This was in itself a pious and praiseworthy action, which could not be anything but laudable in the sight of God and man; it being a thing so just and natural in a religious raised to the prelacy, to remember his Order and his brethren when he could do so. Nevertheless he so much regretted the expense of this edifice, because it was beyond his jurisdiction, that thinking he had done a wrong to the poor of his diocese, he resolved to repair it in some fashion by building them another college at Valentia, where he placed some priests, and gave it the name of our Lady of the Temple, in honor and consideration of the favor God had done him in calling him to religion on the day that the

Blessed Virgin was presented in the Temple, and to show all religious, and especially those whom Divine Providence had raised to ecclesiastical dignities, how they should esteem their first vocation.

It is proper here to mention the inscription the good prelate had placed on the front of this college, at the time he dedicated it to our Lady. "To the honor and glory of the Blessed Virgin, and for the good and profit of all souls, but particularly those of this diocese; I, brother Thomas of Villanova, by the grace of God and the holy see, archbishop of Valentia, have built and founded in this city of Valentia, a college for poor scholars, under the title of the most Blessed Virgin Mary of the Temple, inasmuch as on the same day that she was presented in the Temple, I was presented to receive the habit of our glorious Father St. Augustine, in the convent of Salamanca. And in memory of this signal benefit which I received from the liberal hand of our Lord, through the intercession of His Holy Mother, I have dedicated this temple to the most sacred Virgin, and I wish that every year the day of her Presentation may be solemnly celebrated as a festival in the chapel of this college."

The same feeling which led him to form this college under the name of the Blessed Virgin, induced him also to ornament and embellish his church with very rich and exquisite hangings of tapestry which he presented to the Cathedral, whereon the joyful mysteries of this Queen of Angels are admirably represented in silk; the beauty of the material being surpassed by the skill employed in the workmanship, so as almost to exceed nature.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE MIRACLES WROUGHT BY OUR LORD IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF ALMS BY ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

THE Holy Spirit speaking of a rich man who has no attachment to riches, who values them as they deserve, and who while possessing them uses them as not his own, designates him as one who works miracles. "Blessed is he who is rich, and can preserve the innocence of his heart in the possession of riches. But who is he, and where is he to be found? Wherever he is,

he deserves to be praised and to be canonized as one who does what is beyond the power and strength of nature." It is Christians to whom God has entrusted temporal goods, that the Holy Spirit speaks of thus. They who by the rays of faith with which they are enlightened, use their wealth only as a means of acquiring virtue; not in fomenting vice, and encouraging themselves in every degrading crime. To raise the dead, to give sight to the blind, and to cast out devils, are supernatural works, and pure and simple effects of the goodness of God; yet without doubt our Lord sometimes employs the wicked and impious in performing these miracles. But to live poor, and like a poor man in the midst of the greatest abundance; to possess riches of gold and silver, and yet to regard only those of eternity; this is what can never be done, and is never seen without especial assistance from heaven, and a more particular grace from the Divine Goodness; so that it is a more solid and certain pledge of a man's holiness than if he could resuscitate the dead and work other miracles.

After what has been said of the wonderful detachment of our saintly prelate from earthly riches, and of the use he made of them, which the Holy Spirit calls so great a

miracle, it would seem scarcely necessary, in order to make his sanctity acknowledged by all, to mention those more striking and obvious miracles which our Lord enabled him to work. The multiplication of his revenue which never amounted to a third part of what he annually distributed to the poor, was a continual miracle, and would seem sufficient to be mentioned; yet there are so many individual cases well known and well attested, that to pass them by unnoticed would be injurious to this history, and deprive the reader of knowledge which he will not find useless. For these reasons, then, I will relate some of the most remarkable instances on record.

The holy archbishop, whose principal concern was always the care of the poor, foreseeing one year shortly after harvest that there would be much suffering amongst them, on account of the poor crops, provided for it in time, and like a good father, to anticipate the evil, bought up from the farmers all the corn they could spare, for a price which paid them so well they found no reason to complain. He ordered all the corn he had bought to be carried to the environs of Valentia, and for the more distant parishes he caused some to be distributed here and

there in portions ready for the relief of the poor, of which he knew the number and the necessities. The granaries of his house, and even the hall, of which I have spoken before, were filled with the grain he had bought, and he ordered his steward to deliver a certain quantity every week to all the poor of the town, as also to those other needy persons whom he relieved secretly every month. His charity, which in this public distress had ample scope for exercise, had its eye upon all and provided for all, like another Joseph. Now as it was extremely difficult to conceal charity so general and extensive, several persons who until now had lived without assistance, but whom the times had brought to poverty, came to him likewise to implore his mercy. Amongst others there came three poor widows, who for a long time had lived very comfortably, and in the reputation of being rich and at their ease. But at length they were reduced to such distress, that they could no longer subsist without making it known, and threw themselves at the feet of this charitable father, entreating him to have compassion on them and their poor children, and that he would be pleased to give them a small portion of corn, as he did to others. He immediately commanded they

should be satisfied, upon which his steward told him they had finished distributing all the corn which was in the house destined for the poor, which was not astonishing, seeing the great number who begged for it at every hour of the day, it being a thing impossible that it should last so long as he thought.

The good prelate was greatly surprised at the answer of his steward. "No," said he, "I cannot think it is as you say; go up and see if there does not remain a little to give these poor women." His servants went merely to satisfy him, and returned assuring him that it was all gone, and that the place even had been swept. "It is not possible," he still said; "I will go myself and see if it is so." He went, followed by his servants and steward. "Open the door," said he, "I have so much confidence in the goodness of God as to believe He will have pity on these poor women." The door was opened, and the granary found to be filled with corn, not without great astonishment on the part of the steward and the two servants, who were bewildered and almost terrified at the sight of so evident a miracle that God had wrought by the merits and in recompense of the faith of this charitable father. He caused a sack of corn to be given to each of these poor

widows, and relieved the one who had nine children of three of her little ones, taking the charge of them himself. He endeavored to comfort them all, and exhorted them to patience in their labors, and never to distrust Divine Providence. He recommended secrecy to all those who had seen this wonderful miracle; he even forbade them, in the name and on the part of our Lord, to say anything of it to any one. For some time the miracle was kept secret, even in Valentia, but in course of time a confused account of it was spread abroad, and at length it became public and known to every one. Those who were the witnesses of it made juridical depositions, and his confessor, Father James Montiel, attested it; and the author, whose history I follow, preached soon afterwards on the subject, from the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, (it being the fourth Sunday of Lent,) with which the Son of God satisfied thousands of persons, to show how the mercy of God appears in multiplying alms, when it pleases Him, in favor of the poor.

It often happened that the cloth he bought for the poor multiplied in the hands of the persons engaged in making it up, so that in cutting it out, more shirts and sheets were

found, by a very considerable number, than the cloth could possibly furnish, humanly speaking. Sometimes the linen was multiplied in the giving, it having often been seen by those who distributed it, that the poor received more than they had intended to give them. This miraculous multiplication was not confined to corn and linen, with which he fed and clothed the poor; his money also increased almost visibly in the distribution of his alms. As he was once journeying in the country, he commanded one of his servants, who was entrusted with a bag of money, to draw from it a certain sum that he wished to distribute among several poor people that he saw before him. "My Lord," said he, "there is not much remaining; it has lasted a long time, considering how largely you give every hour of the day." The servant, going to his mail to take the bag, which he knew had been more than half emptied, found it as full of money as when he received it on leaving Valentia. This prodigy so astonished him that he threw himself at the feet of the Saint, recognizing in his person the power of Him who had just wrought this miracle by his merits.

To conclude the account of this kind of miracles I will mention one more which is

no less admirable. The good prelate was accustomed to send Bishop Cevrian and Dr. de la Porte, his visitor, to make the visitation of his diocese every year. That their efforts and labors might be more effectual and less interested, he forbade them to take anything whatever from the clergy, not even a repast, amply providing them with all that was required, that they might not be a charge to any one. Knowing also how much more efficacious spiritual charity is when accompanied by temporal, he caused them to be followed by a quantity of serge, linen, and clothes of all kinds, with a very considerable sum of money, to be distributed amongst the country poor, furnishing them even with crosses, chalices, and ornaments for the churches which had none, and which had not the means of procuring them. Upon their departure he exhorted them to carry their hearts and hands open, to give with joy and alacrity, and especially to new converts, to make them understand it was their souls, not their goods that they sought, and to remember that God is never sparing in His gifts to those who are liberal to Him. Our Lord, willing to show how agreeable such service is to Him, permitted the two visitors, after having finished their visit at a

place called Xavea, to go on to another. They were no sooner arrived there, than Dr. de la Porte, thinking to take some money from his portmanteau to begin his almsgiving, was wonderfully surprised and distressed at not finding there the bag for the poor. He ransacked and turned over all his goods, but could find only the money for their own expenses, and not that for alms.

He wrote to the curate of Xavea, and dispatched a man in the night, praying him to see the landlord where they had lodged, but this proved to be useless; the man returned in the morning with the answer from the curate, that nothing could be found in the inn. Being in the greatest affliction at the loss, they went to say mass with all the devotion possible, to recommend this affair to our Lord as His own. He heard their prayers. For being returned to the inn, and on the point of using the money allotted for their expenses to relieve the poor who had hastened to see them, resolving to borrow money on the promise of the prelate, with which they were furnished in writing, at the first place they could, what was their surprise and astonishment when they went to take the bag, to find there the one appropriated to the poor. What increased their joy and

astonishment was, they not only recovered all the money they had left, but also what they had taken from it to give away, the bag being so full that it seemed to have been squeezed and pressed to make it hold more. On their return to Valentia they related this incident to the Saint; but he, without showing any surprise, said, smiling, that the same thing had often happened to him in almsgiving, our Lord multiplying money in favor of the poor, when after having done all that he could, there still remained many to be relieved. "Have then faith," said he, "enlarge you heart when you give to the poor, without fear of falling into want, because we have in heaven a great Master, and a most liberal Father of the poor, who will never fail to furnish us with something to give them if we trust in Him, and treat them liberally, after His example."

When he had land that he wished to let out to farm, though he put it up to a public auction, where every one was at liberty to name any sum he pleased, he was still desirous it should not fetch a price above its value and the strict rule of equity. Hearing one day that two merchants piqued themselves on being the highest bidders for some of his land, and of having raised the price

of it to their own disadvantage, he sent to tell them to put a stop to it. When any loss happened to any of his farmers, he never expected them to make it good, but always requited them for it, though in justice he was not called upon to do so. Sometimes to prevent their deceiving him and abusing his goodness, he ascertained the truth of the facts. It once happened that a certain cavalier of Alzira, who had rented his tithes of the same land of Alzira, not having the means of paying at the time fixed, from some misfortune which had befallen him, permitted himself to be summoned by the archbishop's officers, which also caused some expense, as he did not answer the summons. At length, finding himself pressed on all sides, and not knowing how to hide himself from the threatened storm, he was obliged to have recourse to the compassion of the good prelate, not having the courage to disclose his distress before, for fear of losing the high character he had acquired of being a good paymaster. He then came humbly to represent to him the sad state of his affairs, begging him to order that a stop should be put to his pursuit, promising him that he would acquit himself of the debt if he would be pleased to grant him a short delay. "Take care," replied the

Saint, "that what you say is true, for I shall make inquiries about it." Having ascertained that what this poor cavalier had told him was perfectly true, he sent for him and said, "God forgive you; why did you not have recourse to me when first this debt was demanded of you, and tell me how you were inconvenienced? However, be not troubled. I not only grant you the time you ask, which is little, but I declare that I will not take a single penny from the farm. I release you from payment for the whole year, because I see that you are poor, and in that capacity I have no claim upon you. The money I now give you is not mine, it belongs to the poor."

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE DEATH OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

ST. THOMAS passed eleven years thus in the exercise of every virtue, with all possible zeal and affection, laboring to procure the glory of God, the reform of His Church, the salvation of souls, and the relief of the poor, until the year 1555, which Divine Providence had fixed upon as that which should end his labors, and recompense his merits, and put him in the possession of a happiness which, as he said, in an apparition which is well authenticated, "the whole world could neither understand nor be able to bestow." The death of a saint and of a great and good man is generally looked upon by his country as the presage of some approaching calamity; and as a laborer who sees the air become thick and dark hastens to gather in his corn, to shelter it from the threatened tempest, so our Blessed Lord, who watches over His elect, draws them to Himself from among those He is about to chastise for their crimes, that the innocent

may not share the punishment of the guilty, calling them by His pure mercy from this mortal and perishable life to that of an ever blessed eternity. It is this which makes wise men, who are aware of what the public lose by the death of a saint, regret and deplore it, as Elisha mourned the carrying up into heaven of the holy prophet Elijah, because of the fatal consequences they foresee will ensue. By his departure they find themselves deprived of the blessing of his presence, which served them as a shield and buckler to defend and protect them against the arrows of Divine vengeance justly excited.

The death of a friend of God is, then, a sign of some great scourge from heaven to punish the sins of men. Such was that of our holy archbishop of the town and kingdom of Valentia, since having died in the end of the year 1555, his diocese was nearly perishing from a famine in 1556, which was the forerunner of a horrible pestilence that caused such ravages the following years of 1557 and 1558, that there scarcely remained any among the living to bury the dead.

On the 29th of August he fell sick of a quinsy, brought on by his continual watchings and study, accompanied by a pain in the chest, which began to trouble him as soon as

he became archbishop, from the little repose he allowed himself. For, to satisfy himself in the discharge of his duty, which occupied him nearly all the day, and to keep up his practice of mental prayer, and his other spiritual exercises, he was constrained to employ the greater part of the night, and to deprive himself of necessary sleep. He had said mass the day before with very great devotion to St. Augustine, whose feast it was, having always borne a singular respect to the name and memory of that illustrious father, it ever being his glory and delight to remember he was one of his children. The weakness which suddenly seized him after saying his office, made him know that the time of his departure was approaching; and he could not refrain from showing the joy this anticipation gave him, as if he had received some special favor from the hand of Almighty God. Then judging by the fever, which increased, that he should not rally, he made a general confession, placing himself in the hands of our Blessed Redeemer, entreating Him, with the most humble and entire resignation, to dispose of his life and death according to His good pleasure.

The Monday following, which was the 2d of September, he earnestly desired to receive

the blessed Sacrament, which was solemnly brought him in procession for the example and edification of the people. The blessed Sacrament was also exposed in all the churches, with the forty hours prayer, in which every one joined for the benefit of their good bishop, and communicated with a more than common devotion from the hands of bishop Cevrian. The canons, religious, the greater part of his clergy, and as many persons as could enter his chamber, were bathed in tears, fearing they were going to lose their dear father and pastor, whom they so loved, and by whom their affection was so tenderly returned. On the Thursday, three days before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the physicians having pronounced him to be slightly amended, all the city, fluctuating between fear and hope, breathed freely once more at this happy news. However, as the Saint felt himself more oppressed than he had yet done, and as it is also very possible that our Lord then revealed to him the hour of his death, which it is certain He did before it arrived, he caused five thousand ducats which he kept in the sacristy of the cupola, to be brought to him, and placed them in the hands of bishop Cevrian, of the canon Michael Vigue, of Father Peter of

Salamanca, religious of the order of St. Dominic, and of his almoner and treasurer. "You know the affection you ought to have for me," said he, "and I doubt not that you will willingly do me a good service. Here is an occasion which presents itself. Do me the favor to go over all the parishes of the city on every side, and distribute all this money to the poor, each one according to his wants. Have care also for the persons of quality who are in distress. But I entreat you, in the name of God, do not bring a single penny back into my house, for that would grieve me. If you cannot dispose of all to-day, finish to-morrow." They employed the whole of the next two days in seeing and visiting all the poor families they could find, giving large alms to those who were in debt, or to those who had daughters,—to some a hundred ducats, to others fifty or sixty, and to none less than four ducats.

These two days were not sufficient to empty their purse. The Saint inquired on their return if all had been disposed of; and on their answering that they had still twelve hundred ducats, though they had relieved all the poor in Valentia that they could discover, he exclaimed with great feeling, "O, miserable sinner that I am, must this money remain

this night in my house! go seek some other poor, though it is late, and if you cannot succeed, carry it to the hospital. Do me this favor I beseech you." They told him that what remained would be very serviceable in paying the nurses, and for the support of the poor orphans who would be in danger of suffering much, in case it should please God to call him to Himself. "I have provided for them for three years," replied he, "so pray, gentlemen, give me this consolation, and go immediately and distribute the money amongst the poor." Returning to see him the next morning, which was the Vigil of the Nativity of our Lady, they told him they had given all. "My friends," said he, "I pray God with all my heart, to bless and comfort you, for having thus comforted me by what you tell me." Then turning his eyes towards his crucifix, which he had used in the conversion of so many sinners, they saw him weep for joy, thanking our Lord for granting him the favor to die poor, as he had desired. His peace of mind was a little disturbed shortly after by his treasurer, who came to tell him that he had that day received some money, and to mention that his furniture was still in the house. But the Saint would not lose the merit of the poverty he loved so

much, but commanded the money to be divided amongst his servants, and as to his furniture, he caused it all to be taken to the college of poor students, to whom he had left it by will, excepting the bed on which he lay, which he gave to the keeper of the prisons, begging him to lend it him, for the short remainder of his life, that he might be able to die absolutely despoiled of everything.

The pain which he felt was violent, yet he suffered without complaint; his countenance was always calm, and he preserved his judgment to the last, perfect and entire. Notwithstanding all his pain and weakness, he received those who came to visit him with the same gentleness and affability which he displayed when in full health, and permitted none to leave his presence without exciting them to the love and fear of God and care for their salvation by some passage from Scripture, judiciously selected according to the disposition and state of each of their souls. Several of them returned as much touched with what they had seen and heard, as if an angel had spoken to them rather than a man. The canons who had learnt from the physicians, that according to the natural course of the malady, he could not last long, went to beg him to allow them the honor of

giving him a place of sepulture in their church; he received their offer thankfully, and testified all the gratitude possible, but said to Don Jerome Cartos, who was on his knees before him delivering their message, that he felt extremely obliged to their body, for the favor done him on this occasion, but humbly begged them to consider that he was a religious, and as such he had thought it best to choose his burial place among his brethren of our Lady of Succors, and called upon them, in the name of God, not after his death to prevent his last wish from being attended to. Upon this, not to distress him, they dropped the subject, intending to resume it on a more fitting opportunity.

On Saturday evening, the Vigil of our Lady, after having entertained himself some time alone with his God, he caused Extreme Unction to be administered to him, and received this Sacrament with sentiments of devotion which excited the admiration of those who assisted, making the responses himself with the other ecclesiastics, and reciting the verses and the prayers which the Church is accustomed to use in this holy ministry. That being concluded, the canons, not repulsed by his refusal, threw themselves a second time on their knees, renewing

their request touching his sepulture. But he returned the same answer; that he was a religious, and that he did not desire to be separated from his brethren, either in life or death; adding, that if our Lord in His goodness, and without regarding his offences, deigned to show him mercy, he would endeavor to prove his gratitude for this last mark of their affection, by interceding for them in His presence.

The next morning (the Nativity of our Lady) he prayed his suffragan to dress quickly an altar in his chamber, and to prepare himself to say mass there. "For," said he, "as there remain for me only a few moments of existence, I wish not to leave this world without once more seeing my Saviour in this holy sacrifice." When the priest came to the Sanctus, they raised his head a little, and at the consecration he adored the blessed Sacrament with so much tenderness, and so many tears flowed from his eyes, that no one who was present could prevent doing the same. Immediately after the elevation he began the Psalm, "*In te Domine speravi*," which he continued with tears until the verse, "*In manus tuas*," and when the priest finished his communion, he at the same instant finished the course of his

holy life, and gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator. All the assistants remarked in his last moments, that the nearer his end approached, the more beautiful, serene, and shining his countenance became.

His death, which was known immediately in the city, caused so much grief and dismay, that from the cries and lamentations which were heard on every side, it would have been supposed that each one had lost his own father. Every church in Valentia was hung with black. Every one appeared in an extreme affliction and depression of spirit for the loss they had sustained, whilst the holy body was being prepared for the funeral ceremonies. He was clothed in his black habit instead of the white which he had worn during his illness. They then put on his pontificals, the cross, the mitre, and the pallium, and everything appertaining to an archbishop. The moment after his death the palace had been so besieged by people wishing to enter, that to prevent confusion it had been found necessary to close the doors until bishop Cevrian and the heads of the chapter had dressed him themselves, and carried and laid him in the great hall where he was accustomed to give alms and comfort the poor, watering his hands and his face

with their tears which they could not restrain. But no sooner was there a free entry than every one crowded in, each thinking himself happy if he could see him and kiss his hands, but especially the poor, who, according to bishop Panfile's account, amounted to eight thousand. The Divine goodness permitted it should be thus for the honor of the Saint, whom they regretted as their father and chief consolation.

The chapter, magistrates, nobility, the parishes, and all the orders of the city followed the body from the archiepiscopal palace to the cathedral, and from the cathedral to the monastery of our Lady of Succors, where he was to be interred. But of all the means taken to show him honor in his funeral obsequies, there was nothing which proved so clearly the veneration in which he was held, as the deep feeling of sorrow testified by all present. In place of chanting and reciting the prayers ordered by the Church in such cases, nothing was heard but weeping and groaning. The priests, religious, and all the people, having their hearts so oppressed with grief that they could utter no other sounds but those of mourning and lamentation; whilst the poor on their part filled the air with their cries and groans.

"What shall we do, what will become of us," said they, "without our good father?" Thus this sad and mournful procession went on till it arrived at our Lady of Succors, where his sacred body was solemnly interred in the most honorable place in the church, notwithstanding the Saint had expressed a wish to be buried in all respects like his brethren.

As he had left nothing to defray the expense of any monument to his memory, having disposed of everything in favor of the poor, without caring to leave his name written on earth, our Lord, who had written it in heaven, to honor it also on earth, inspired one of his canons, Francis Bocca, who during his life had always considered him as a Saint and a great servant of God, after his death to erect a rich tomb of marble with his figure in pontificals in relief. As also to engrave this epitaph, to descend to posterity as a memorial of his extreme charity towards the poor:

"*Conditur hoc tumulo D. Frater Thomas de Villanova Archiepiscopus Valentinus, Divini verbi Prædicator eximius: Qui Christi pauperes, benigna quidem manu, non solum vivens fovit; sed ad extremum usque spiritum amplissimis Eleemosinis est prosequutus. Obiit autem die Nativitatis sanctissimæ Virginis Mariæ, anno M. D. LV.*"

In like manner he inspired the bishop of Segovia, formerly disciple and religious of St. Thomas, to put his writings in order especially his Sermons and Commentaries upon the Canticles, and to have them printed under the name of the author, who in the schools of Spain is always designated the Seraphic Doctor, to distinguish him from St. Thomas Aquino the Angelic Doctor. One of his admirers has given us reason to hope that the first leisure time he can obtain shall be employed in revising his works, to correct them of the numerous errors which have crept into the German edition, and in a new dress to render them more common in France.

It is of faith to believe that the charity of the Saints and servants of God towards their friends is nothing lessened by their death. And as St. Peter promised the faithful in his second epistle to remember them before God after his decease, that by his care and prayers the doctrine which he had taught them should not be effaced from their memory, so they lose not the affection for those with whom they have contracted a friendship upon earth, but it is rather increased in heaven, where they pray for them and procure them every possible favor with

so much the more zeal and affection, as in a state of glory their charity is more pure and perfect.

St. Thomas of Villanova, who wished to end his life as he had so long occupied it, in assisting all men, promised some of his friends in particular to remember them after his death. That they might be confirmed in their opinion of his holiness and merits, our Lord permitted him to appear to them after his death, radiant with light and glory. I will relate some amongst many of these remarkable appearances.

The respect and devotion which the chapter bore to his memory, induced the canons, who by his death became possessed of the power to alter many things in the government of their church, to content themselves with simply electing a grand vicar, till the see was filled. Through respect and love for their venerated prelate, they permitted the order he had appointed, and all his officers, to remain as he had established them, and bishop Cevrian and Dr. de la Porte only left the palace when they heard that Don Francis of Navarre was named archbishop. They then took for their residence the great house of the archdeacon, near the cathedral. On the evening they arrived, all their dis-

course after supper turned upon the virtues and conduct of their charitable pastor, of the loss sustained by the city and kingdom of Valentia, and especially by the poor, who seemed in him to have lost a good and merciful father.

They then retired to their chambers, their tears flowing plentifully at the remembrance of all his goodness. Dr. de la Porte, who, filled with grief and sadness, had continued watching till two hours after midnight, perceived at that time, in the midst of a beautiful and resplendent light, the blessed St. Thomas approach the bed with a countenance full of majesty and reverence, and dressed in his Augustinian habit as he usually wore it during his life. "Why do you weep for me?" said he; "weep for me no longer if you love me, since I enjoy a repose and happiness that the whole united world has not the power to bestow." Having said this he vanished from his eyes with the light that surrounded him, leaving his devotee with mingled feelings of holy joy and admiration, scarcely knowing whether he ought to consider this as a true appearance of the Saint or an illusion of the enemy. Yet he was wonderfully consoled in his inmost heart, and as soon as it was day repaired to the

chamber of the bishop, who seeing the joy and astonishment depicted in his countenance, suspected what had happened to him. "What is the news?" said the good prelate to him, "is it possible that you have seen our good father?" "How, my lord," replied he, "have you also seen him yourself? I have indeed seen him, and I came here with the intention of telling you all that passed. In the name of God, tell me what happened to you." Upon comparing, they found that the Saint had appeared to them both the same hour, in the same habit, with the same splendor, and that he had rejoiced and comforted their hearts with the same words. Having well examined and considered the subject together, there remained not the least doubt upon their minds that it was a real and true apparition with which the Saint had deigned to honor them.

Another apparition, which will be the last I shall relate, that I may enter at once upon his miracles, will be an illustrious example of his charity and love for the poor; since in the midst of his enjoyment in glory he remembered them, and continued his care over them in their sufferings. The Saint finding himself on the bed of death in his last illness, and desiring to dispose of what-

ever remained in his possession in favor of the poor, had summoned his tenants to know to what amount each was indebted to him, and to draw from them a promise to pay it at a certain time, that the whole might be distributed to the poor according to his last will and the apostolic brief which he had obtained to be used for that purpose. Then addressing himself to a certain citizen, whom he had always thought his friend, and a man of perfect probity, "You are witness," said he, "to the promises of my tenants, by which the greater number oblige themselves to pay me at Christmas, and the rest at Easter. I believe they will do so, but if they fail, keep them to their word; I confide these notes to you, and entreat you for the love of God, as soon as you shall have received the money, to distribute it amongst the poor, and comfort them in their misery at the beginning of the year. And may God in return bless you and make you happy."

His friend promised him faithfully all that he asked; but no sooner was the Saint laid in the grave, and the fear of his ever becoming acquainted with his perfidy at an end, than after having received the money which was due with much care and exactness, he distributed only a part of it amongst the

poor, and used the rest in furthering his own affairs, though with the intention of restoring it when it should be convenient to him. St. Thomas appeared to him on the night of the Epiphany, and with a voice animated with anger and a just resentment, said to him, "How! faithless that you are, is it thus you deceive me? How long have you lost your honor and stifled your conscience? I should never have thought this of you; nor would it ever have entered my mind to believe that you would have been so little conscientious as to prefer your own interest to that of the poor, and to assist yourself by leaving them in distress. What you have done, is a fault for which God will not fail to punish you, unless you prevent it by a timely penitence; because the tears which the miserable have shed, are living words which penetrate the heavens, demanding justice of God for your sins." At these words the man was seized with horror, and quite beside himself at such a reprimand. He protested he would fulfil his promise to the letter, and entreated the Saint in the name of God to implore the divine mercy for him.

The next day he returned a part of the money, but still not the whole, being unwilling to inconvenience himself or disarrange

his affairs. The Saint again visited him on the night of the Purification, and with words much more harsh and severe, called him a liar, and a man without faith; he threatened him with sudden death, and told him that God would never have mercy on him, since he disdained to show it to the poor who were his members. "You imagine," said he, "that I am dead. No, no, I live a life infinitely better than that which I lived when you pledged your word to me." Then turning towards a boy who followed him with a discipline in his hand, "Strike, strike this man," said he, "that he may remember his duty, and that he may obtain a wholesome spirit of fear." The boy obeyed, and disciplined him till the Saint told him to desist. "Lose not the remembrance of this warning," said he, "profit by this punishment, it is far less than you have deserved."

It was scarcely day, when the man, astonished beyond expression, called for the archbishop's almoner, not being able to rise from the bed himself, on account of his wounds, and relating to him what had passed, placed in his hands all the money he had in the house; and as more was necessary, he borrowed of his friends, that he might not remain indebted to a creditor so exact and

punctual as the Saint. He published everywhere the glory enjoyed by the Saint, and the zeal he continued to have for the poor, as well in heaven as when on earth; like the holy patriarch Abraham, who after having passed the best part of his life in works of mercy and hospitality, even after his death lodges the poor Lazarus in his bosom.

May it please God of his infinite goodness so to dispose the hearts and desires of each one of us, that we may profit from the example this holy prelate has left us of his virtues; that following his footsteps, and aspiring to attain his humility, meekness, recollection, charity, and mercy, we may labor for the glory of our heavenly Father and the good of our brethren; that our end may be as happy as his; and that with him we may eternally enjoy the repose and immortal felicity which he now enjoys, and will for ever enjoy throughout all ages!

ABRIDGMENT

OF THE

MIRACLES OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA,

RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE,
AND ARCHBISHOP OF VALENTIA.

TAKEN FROM THE PROCESSES OF HIS CANONIZATION.

THOUGH it may seem, after the recital which has been made of the virtues and merits of St. Thomas of Villanova, that here the discourse might end, and that it could not extend farther than his death and burial, without going beyond the bounds of history; nevertheless, as my design in writing his Life was no other than to make known his holiness by the relation of his virtuous actions, and as the miracles performed by God in his favor and by his suffrages are also proofs of his sanctity, though not so convincing as his charity and good works; it is well I should relate some out of that prodigious number of miracles with which our Lord honored his name and memory, especially a part of those which were verified and approved with

all the solemnities required in such cases for proceeding to his canonization; knowing that in the question of miracles it is better rather to regard their nature than their numbers.

After one word, then, on the miraculous incorruption of his body, not to weary the reader, it will suffice to relate those only which were last exposed at Rome on the day of his canonization, in pictures suspended from the ceiling of St. Peter's, with an inscription at the foot of each.

INCORRUPTION OF THE BODY OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

In the year 1588, twenty-three years after the death of St. Thomas, the devotion of the people at his tomb increased daily, from the continual miracles which God performed for the benefit of those who had recourse to his merits and suffrages.

A canon of the cathedral, Don John Baptist Vivas, who revered him much, resolved to give him fresh proofs of his devotion and remembrance, by providing, at his own expense, a silver lamp of great value, and a railing of bronze richly worked to inclose his tomb, which until then had remained open to the church. To lay down this railing it was necessary to raise the tomb and the

marble figure upon it, and to dig the earth around it. While this was being done there issued from the tomb an odor so sweet and agreeable, that in the judgment of some perfumers who were present, there was nothing to be compared to it, either amongst the most excellent perfumes, or flowers the most rare and exquisite.

In this exhalation there was a something divine and inexpressible, which elevated the mind and feelings beyond what was natural. All judged unanimously that this odor came from heaven, since there was nothing to be found like it upon earth, and that God, through His goodness and justice, began to make this holy body enjoy, in some sort, the happiness that the soul which had animated it already possessed.

But when, upon seeing and touching him, it was found that his body was still entire, and almost as fresh as when they laid him there, not even his habit being decayed or corrupted, there was a universal cry of joy and admiration at the wonderful spectacle; and they blessed the infinite power of Him who had done this for the glory of His faithful servant and Saint. Everything was afterwards carefully examined, and upon its being verified that what was seen could not be the effect

either of art or nature, but proceeded from the Author of nature Himself, who when He pleases renders Himself admirable in His saints, a deposition was drawn up in due form, which was produced thirty years afterwards, in the year 1618, with several other testimonies to his sanctity, and laid before Pius V., who in the same year declared him blessed, permitting the religious of the Order of St. Augustine, of the kingdoms of Castile, Arragon, Valentia, and Catalonia, to revere his memory, and celebrate his feast on the 18th of September.

Soon afterwards Gregory XV., successor of Pius V., desirous that this celestial light should be raised higher to spread its rays far and wide, to the glory of God and the exaltation of the holy Church, granted by a benignant extension of his favors, that the festival should be kept universally in all the houses of the order, with a double office, which was continued till the pontificate of Alexander VII., whom God had destined to complete the work of his canonization. This pontiff held him up to public veneration by the declaration which he made in the year 1658, accompanied with that splendor which the pious reader, who wishes to satisfy his curiosity, will find described in the account

which is printed of the holy and august ceremonies of his canonization.

MIRACLE I.

MULTIPLICATION OF CORN IN FAVOR OF THE POOR.

THE first of these miracles was that which St. Thomas wrought to relieve a poor widow who had several children, whom she was unable to support unless assisted by his charity. She went to pour into his fatherly ear all her cares and distresses, and the state of destitution to which she was reduced, and entreated him to bestow on her a bushel of corn, to save her children from feeling the pangs of hunger. Her request was granted instantly; but to the faith of the Saint was reserved the execution of it. He commanded his servants to provide her with the quantity of corn she desired, but received for answer, that it was all gone, and that the granary had even been swept. He could not credit the account, and insisted on their going to see if there was not a little still left. They went, merely to satisfy him, and returned assuring him that there was none left. In this there was nothing astonishing, consider-

ing the number that were daily and hourly relieved, as the servants were strictly enjoined never to send any one away empty-handed. But his charity, which was the cause of his granary being so soon emptied, joined to his faith in the mercy of God, made him go himself, saying, that he could not believe that our Lord would abandon him in this strait, when he was endeavoring to relieve Him in the person of this poor widow. He found his confidence was not misplaced, for on his arrival the granary was found to be full of corn, so that he could say, like the rich man in the Gospel, though in a very different sense, "I must pull down my barns," being scarcely able to open the door, so pressed was it by the quantity of corn within. The poor widow received two sacks, whilst the servants, who a moment before had seen the place empty, were altogether astonished, and scarcely knew what to say or think in so extraordinary a case. This miracle seemed in one respect greater than that which the prophet Elijah performed for another widow, since the prophet only multiplied meal, while our Saint caused corn to exist where there was none before, by the power of his faith and word, as if God had communicated to him his absolute power of creating. The

inscription to this miracle, on the picture at St. Peter's at Rome, was as follows:

"*Horreum frumento prorsus vacuum Sancti Thomæ nutu plenum repentè invenitur ad pauperes sublevandos.*"

MIRACLE II.

ST. THOMAS WITH THE SIGN OF THE CROSS CURES A LAME AND PARALYTIC MAN.

ANOTHER miracle which proves, no less than the preceding, the great merits of St. Thomas, and how powerful he was with God, was that of the cure of a poor man who was both lame and paralytic. One day, as the good prelate looked from his chamber into the court where alms were given, he perceived a man who walked with crutches, having lost the use of his limbs, who, after receiving an alms on one side, went over to the other to obtain a second. St. Thomas called him, and asked him if he had not already received an alms. The man acknowledged that he had. "How comes it then," said the Saint, "that you try to get another?" "It is true, my Lord," replied the poor man, "that what I have received is quite enough for myself, but it is not much when divided into four, for I have a wife and two children, who are not

able to come and obtain anything for themselves." "It is not enough, certainly," said the Saint. "Now tell me, which would you prefer—that your health should be restored, or that I should order them to give you four alms every day?" "Please God, my Lord," he replied, "I should prefer recovering my health; for I assure you that if I could work, I would rather do so than beg for the support of my family." "Now then," said the Saint, "have a great faith and confidence in God;" and raising him upright, he gave him his blessing and perfect health at the same time; recommending him to return thanks to Almighty God for what he had just done. The poor man quitted his crutches upon the spot, walked without pain, and as perfectly well as if he had never been afflicted with any disease. This miracle is very similar to that which St. Peter performed on the lame man cured at the gate of the Temple, excepting that the holy apostle excused himself from granting any other aid than that of health, saying that he had neither gold nor silver to bestow, whilst St. Thomas, who had both for the poor, gave some to this poor man, as well as his restoration to health. This happened the year before the death of the holy prelate. The inscription of this miracle was as follows:

"Claudus itemque paralyticus à Sancto Thoma crucis signo liberatur."

MIRACLE III.

A DEAD CHILD BY THE MERITS OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA RAISED TO LIFE AT HIS TOMB.

ONE of the children of Augustine Assenti, widow of Gabriel Cardonne, a citizen of Valentia, named Francis Paul, had been afflicted for seven months with a malignant fever, no physician having been able to do him the least good. At length, after much suffering and being reduced to a state of extreme weakness, he died. The poor mother was quite inconsolable at his loss, and her grief was increased by the regret she felt at not having taken him during his long illness to the tomb of St. Thomas. Yet not losing all hope in his mediation, though they were about to lay her son in the grave, she took him in her arms to our Lady of Succors, and laying him on the tomb of St. Thomas, prayed him with many tears to assist her in this extremity. Scarcely had she prayed for the space of three Paters and three Ave Marias than the child raised his head, and held out his arms to his mother, who embraced him with a joy which could be more

easily imagined than expressed in words. She returned her grateful and humble thanks to our Lord and St. Thomas, whom she ever afterwards honored as her patron and holy benefactor. The child, who had attained the age of seventeen months, recovered from his first death to die again in his fourth year. This miracle had these following words for the inscription:

"*Puer, adolescens XVII., mensium Matre ad sepulchrum Sancti Thomæ precante revi-viscit.*"

MIRACLE IV.

A GIRL SIXTEEN YEARS OF AGE ALSO RESUSCITATED AT THE TOMB OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

In the year 1604, a woman of Valentia, named Esperanza Crespo, widow of Anthony Fabia, was in the deepest sorrow at the state of her daughter's health, whose life was despaired of by the physicians, and whose death was only delayed from day to day by the tender and watchful care of her mother. At length she expired, and the poor woman closed her eyes, watering them with the tears which fell from her own. After the body had been

kept some time, and they were upon the point of consigning it to the grave, the thought came into the mother's mind, that she would have recourse to the prayers of St. Thomas of Villanova, whom she particularly venerated, and have her carried to his tomb. She followed her poor child's body, and cold as it lay in the arms of death, made with great faith this prayer: "Blessed father, I beseech you to pray to God for me, that it will please Him to grant me the life of my daughter, for I have a great confidence in you, and I firmly believe that you are a Saint in heaven." This short prayer was no sooner made than the girl began to move and to show all the signs of life and perfect health. Every one present was struck with astonishment, whilst the mother, who had obtained what she so ardently desired, praised and thanked the goodness of God, who had favorably heard her prayers through the merits of St. Thomas of Villanova. This was the inscription of the fourth miracle:

"*Virgo XVI. annorum, cum propè esset ut conderetur, ad vitam à S. Thoma, flagitante Matre revocatur.*"

MIRACLE V.

A BLIND GIRL RECEIVED HER SIGHT AT THE TOMB OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

THIS miracle, so much the more worthy of the Saint's compassion, the subject of it being of so tender an age, was wrought on a little creature named Marcella, daughter Anthony Mathieu, Doctor of Laws, who from the age of three years had suffered from a disease of the stomach, which caused her to vomit blood from her mouth, and to return whatever nourishment was given her. Three months she continued in this state, nothing that was done for her seeming to give her any relief. The disease increased, so that at times she was almost suffocated, and at length her eyes were affected, and she entirely lost her sight Some time afterwards, her mother, who was deeply afflicted at her state, going to make her devotions at the tomb of St. Thomas, determined to take her child with her; and laying her little hands upon the tomb whilst she knelt by her side, she humbly invoked the assistance of the Saint for her. Then leaving the church, she gave some money to the sacristan that mass might be said for that intention. It is most remarkable, that at nine o'clock the next

morning, the very hour when the holy sacrifice was being offered for her daughter, she recovered her sight, and was cured of her disease and all her infirmities, from which she had suffered so much. The rest of her life was passed in the enjoyment of perfect health.

"*Puella triennis, dum ad aram Sancti Thomæ Sacrum peragitur exitiali morbo eripitur.*"

MIRACLE VI.

BY TOUCHING THE RELICS OF ST. THOMAS, A GIRL IS MIRACULOUSLY CURED OF A DISEASE PRONOUNCED INCURABLE.

ANOTHER girl, of the age of twenty-six years, knew not what remedies to use for an ulcer which was spread over the whole of her face, so disfiguring her that no one could look at her without horror. Seeing this disease increase, and at length attack the vital parts of her body, the physician told her plainly that she had now nothing more to do than prepare for death, which would shortly arrive. A friend, who was very devout to St. Thomas, persuaded her to have recourse to his prayers, and to believe firmly that God would not fail to assist her by the merits of the blessed archbishop. She then caused

some of his relics to be brought to her, which she applied herself, with much faith and devotion, to the parts which were the most painful, and almost instantly the disease disappeared. The flesh and skin which had before been putrefied and decayed, quickly recovered their first and natural appearance, as if she had never been afflicted by so dreadful a disease. The inscription to this miracle is in these words:

"*Virginem XVI. annorum fœdè ulceratam, et jam jam morituram, S. Thomæ reliquiæ saluti reddunt.*"

MIRACLE VII.

A CURE VERY SIMILAR TO THE PRECEDING BY THE MERITS OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

A GIRL, whose leg and part of the thigh had been eaten away by an ulcer of long standing, expected death every day, the agonies she suffered rendering her life wearisome and almost insupportable. In this state she addressed herself to St. Thomas, and prayed him with much devotion to intercede for her, that she might obtain, if not the health which she scarcely dared to ask for, at least an alleviation of her pains, and strength to endure them until it should

please our Lord in His mercy to deliver her from them in His own good time, by putting an end to her life and suffering together. Her prayer was heard, and even beyond what she had expected. For the Saint not only obtained the alleviation, but also the entire cure of her disease; the leg, which before had been almost deprived of flesh, being now perfectly sound and firm, without any remains of its former condition, except some cicatrices upon the skin, which remained, as it were, to remind her continually of this wonderful miracle. It is described under this title:

"*Virgo desperato remedio cruris graviter vulnerati Beati Thomæ ope sanatur.*"

MIRACLE VIII.

A WOUNDED MAN, AFTER HAVING KEPT HIS BED TWO YEARS, IS MIRACULOUSLY CURED BY THE INTERCESSION OF ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

One day, when the people of Valentia were diverting themselves in the bull-ring, a shoemaker, named Peter Assentio, had his side pierced by the horns of one of those beasts, which threw him to the ground with so much violence that he lay there dreadfully hurt. He was carried upon a ladder to his

house, and every means taken for his recovery, for two years, without effect. For this reason, finding all human remedies useless, and only exhausting his purse without restoring his health, he resolved to have recourse to heavenly remedies by a special vow, which he made to St. Thomas of Villanova. From the first day of the Novena which he made at his tomb, he felt himself considerably better, and before it was finished, was entirely recovered.

"*Valentinus Sartor, cui taurus in theatro latus graviter effoderat post biennium à St. Thoma liberatur.*"

MIRACLE IX.

A MAN COVERED WITH ULCERS, WHICH CONFINED HIM TO HIS BED FOR FOURTEEN YEARS, IS IN AN INSTANT RECOVERED BY THE PRAYERS OF ST. THOMAS.

A MASTER mason of Valentia, named James Cervere, who had kept his bed for fourteen years, without hope of ever leaving it, except to be carried to the grave, the ulcers with which he was covered being pronounced incurable, in the month of October, 1605, was reduced by a fever and other complaints to the most extreme misery. Seeing then

death before his eyes, he was visited by a person who was very devout to St. Thomas of Villanova, who induced him to invoke his assistance, and to recommend himself to his prayers. The poor man did so, and obliged himself, in case of his restoration to health, to hang a picture over his sepulchre, in which this miracle should be painted. It having pleased our Lord to listen to his prayer, three days were not passed before he found himself perfectly recovered, and all his wounds quite closed and healed. He afterwards faithfully performed his vow to the Saint.

"*Fabro cæmentario lævum latus continenti vulnere excæsum S. Thomæ presidio restituitur.*"

MIRACLE X.

A PARALYTIC RECOVERS HIS HEALTH THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF ST. THOMAS.

In the year 1608, a man of Valentia, named Ciper, at the age of fifty-six years, had a paralytic seizure, which deprived him of the use of one side. He tried every remedy which was suggested for his recovery, but finding that he only spent his time and money with-

out any effect, he asked his health of God in fervent prayer, through the merits of St. Thomas, who, by touching the affected side with his right hand when he was sleeping, perfectly restored to him the use of it.

"*Apopleticus S. Thomæ dextra in somno tactus incolumis evadit.*"

MIRACLE XI.

A WOMAN IN A DANGEROUS LABOR IS MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED, AND HER DEAD CHILD BROUGHT TO LIFE THROUGH THE MERITS OF ST. THOMAS.

ANNE TORRES, wife of John Ramos, a citizen of Valentia, suffering for several days every imaginable pain in her confinement, gave birth at last to a dead child. Those who were present vowed her to St. Thomas, to whom she had always been very devout, and included the child also in the vow, which was no sooner made, than she was in a state to return thanks to God herself. Our Lord not only restored her health, but the life also of the child, through the intercession of St. Thomas, whom she had invoked in her sufferings.

"*Infanti mortuo vita simulque matri in extremis laboranti sanitas ope D. Thomæ restituuntur.*"

MIRACLE XII.

A DEAD MAN RAISED TO LIFE BY ST. THOMAS.

THE author whom I have followed, relates in his history so many miracles performed through the merits of this glorious Saint, from the year of his decease, 1555, to the year 1626, not to mention those which our Lord has continued until the present year, 1659, that there are enough not only to make a third part to this history, but an entire book, which we hope one day to see brought to light. I shall, then, end this account of his miracles with the remark of one who still lives, and who still speaks to preach the merits of this great Saint, to whom he is indebted for the life he now enjoys. This person is an Augustinian religious, named Father Thomas Bosch, between eighteen and nineteen years of age, who maintained a theological thesis in our convent of St. Augustine of Valentia, the 28th of May of last year, 1628, which he dedicated to St. Thomas of Villanova, under this glorious title, "*In vitæ restitutæ obsequium;*" to acknowledge the favor our Lord had shown him in his early years, having miraculously restored him to life by the merits and prayers of St. Thomas, to whom his parents dedicated him.

The truth of this fact cannot be reasonably disputed after the testimony of this thesis, which has been seen, examined, and approved by the Spanish Inquisition, according to custom and the right it possesses in such cases. It has been placed in my hands by brother Louis Lubin Diacie, theologian of the community of Bourges, who has lately brought it from Spain, where the devotion to St. Thomas of Villanova, and the desire of obtaining knowledge, have detained him for some years, and who during his residence at Valentia, has seen this Brother Thomas Bosch, whose learning and virtue he holds in high estimation. He remarked among other things, that in conversation the tears always came into his eyes whenever he spoke of St. Thomas of Villanova. "*In vitæ restitutæ obsequium.*"

THE END.